

RAZORCAVE



THE MEASURE [SA]

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AUTHOR CHRIS WALTER · THE PENETRATORS

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As a non-profit, *Razorcake* is a cultural ambassador of the independent, grassroots, underground punk rock community. Our mission is to continue covering, supporting, and celebrating the artistic community that exists below the corporate media's radar. We hope you enjoy what we do.

One of our contemporaries, *Punk Planet*, a for-profit zine with a similar mission, recently folded. Independent media in America is getting pounded. There aren't many of us left, but we're far from extinct. (The last cockroaches are the most resistant.)

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RAZORCAKE

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The Rhythm Chicken's father never (NEVER!)
keeps a fish he can't fit his brewski in.

THE RAZORCAKE

Tourists Visiting Tourists

"They shit in these plastic bags and smeared them all over their hotel rooms. It was totally punk rock." That should have been a clue. A lady had come over to film us unload zines. She seemed nice enough, but I didn't get what a bunch of rich kids being cocks equated with "being punk." I immediately felt bad for the maid who had to clean up that mess. In the front room, the filmmaker asked me about what I did. Unlike the Germs, what we do isn't secret but it's almost invisible. We make a zine. It's a lot of work. Those zines just didn't float up flight of stairs and they didn't drive themselves to the post office later. There is now proof on film.

I'm an archivist. I keep my punk stuff, organize it, and keep it in good shape. The weeks following, the filmmaker asked to borrow video footage for her film. I rooted around in the boxes in the apartment and let her borrow some tapes.

"Do you have any *Flipsides*?"

"Yeah." Taking time out of a demanding schedule, I scanned requested covers, made sure they were the right format, and sent them along.

A few weeks later, her assistant asked if we had specific band flyers. Donofthedeath, who lives about an hour away, came with a couple boxes he'd found in his very full garage. We spent the good chunk of a fun day looking through them and found many of the ones they were looking for. They then asked if we had more.

This isn't the first time something like that's happened. Sometimes, we take small chances with the zine. I think, "Maybe we are selling ourselves short. Maybe if people just see it, they'll be down." An invisible pair of ill-fitting Bermuda shorts, sun block on the nose, and a funny hat was waiting for me on my next expedition.

I have no illusions about the Warped Tour. I knew what I was getting into. Sorta. Hey, if they want to carry some *Razorcakes* and get kids to read; go for it. I figured the result of our magazine in that zoo would probably have the same affect as shooting a whale with a BB, but I try not to get all purist about it. I negotiated barricades, said the right things to security, and ended up near the entrance. They erected PVC gateways around me. It was clear I wasn't there for the show. I was a tourist in their culture where consumers who had a certain brand of cell phone could cut in line. The compliance was disarming. I dropped off the zines and split. I heard nothing ever again from The Warped Tour.

A couple months later, I asked for the videos back from the filmmaker. Treating me like I was now a burden, she said I could come by her place and pick them up. I said, "No dice." Her assistant eventually dropped them off a month later. And that was the last I heard from them.

Let me back up. Often, when we help people, something positive comes back. I take pride that Razorcake donates to both city libraries and zine libraries, that we donate to non-profit spaces like Cave 9 in Alabama and have a great relationship with The Double Down Saloon: all really gracious folks. If someone contacts us who seems to be genuinely interested, and we can expose them to bands and this culture, I think that's a good thing: ambassadorship instead of assholeishness.

Don't get me wrong. It's not sour grapes that I didn't get asked to the film's premier, it's just that I labored for them for free, and was disposable to their ends.

I felt like I'd been visited by tourists who littered my beach.

Fair enough. I let them in. Hell, I gave them souvenirs.

Lesson learned.

—Todd Taylor

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August 1st, 2007

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Cover drawn by Mitch Clem (mitchclem.com) and colored by Joe Dunn (digitalpimponline.com)

"Usually, hatred is an emotion arising out of the desire to be accepted by another person" —Natsuo Kirino, *Out*

Congratulations to Jim Ruland and Nuvia Crisol Guerra on their marriage.



Natural gas,
not biological
warfare!

Rhythm
Chicken Chili
Tour Van

photo by
Rick Kingsbury

THANK YOU: A soft and cuddly beaver rampage thanks to Mitch Clem for the cover and Joe Dunn for the artful browning; Pizza place says, "fuck you, you gotta eat" to gentrification thanks to Kris Tripplaar for his photo in Liz's column; Hey, Mitch Clem's everywhere in this issue—Usurp! Usurp!—thanks for his debut column and his record head rockin' out illustration in Craven's column; like Turbonegro said, in darkness, there is light thanks to Will Kwiatkowski for his photo in Gary's column; Yup that's really Amy all dolled up thanks to Chinese Sears Portrait Studios; I'd pay twenty bucks for Nørh to replace Moses in the next version of world history thanks to Travis T. for his illustration; to Ruckus Thomas for another great shot of touristic bewilderment in the Chicken's column; It's broken halo time thanks to Steve Larder for his illustration in Dale's column; We're still deciphering the readout of how wide the pole up Geddy Lee's ass is, treating Nardwuar like that, thanks to Maynard for his illustration; Fists up and let them do the talking thanks to Brad Beshaw for the illustration in Sean's column; Craven, you have opened an enigma, wrapped it in musical notes, and asked an unanswerable question about rock. We salute you; Chris Walter's hairline will never recede because it's a tattoo thanks to Allan MacInnis for his interview; Your secret passions are now in print thanks to Mr. Z for his copyrights interview; Unpeel the banana and put the monkey in a suit thanks to Dave Disorder for his layout; I had no idea Frank Zappa was in The Penetrators thanks to Mike Frame for his interview; I'm glad Etta's doing much better thanks to Julia Smut for the layout; Yeah. Machine guns would work well thanks to Chris Baxter for the Circle One layout; Jimmy lived this shit, back off thanks to Sr. Alvarado for his interview; The UPC debate rages on thanks to Chris Peigler for his I Object interview; Man, that's awesome, the beavers have eaten part of the band name thanks to Uri Garcia for both the Measure [SA] and I Object layouts; Not quite Napalm Death, but I like it thanks to Matt Pullman for his Measure [SA] and Carl Gunhouse, Tim Burke, and Chelsea Suarez for their photos; Hey publicist, don't treat us like second class citizens. Send us full album art. Go ahead, drill a hole in it. No wonder your "industry" is tanking thanks to the following reviewers: Mr. Z, Joe Evans III, Speedway Randy, Ryan Leach, Kurt Morris, Mike Faloon, CT Terry, Ty Stranglehold, Donofanewerror, Sean Koepenick, Keith Rosson, Lord Kveldulfr (professor), Dave Disorder, Jason Donner-party, Maddy Tight Pants, Sarah Shay, Jimmy Alvarado, Josh Benke, Jennifer Whiteford, Aphid Peewit, Chris Devlin, and Lauren Trout; If we were mean, we could have sneezed on the last issue you were holding thanks to Donofthebulkmail, Stacy Smilanick, and Chris Devlin for helping with the processing.

OK.BRING THE TROOPS HOME



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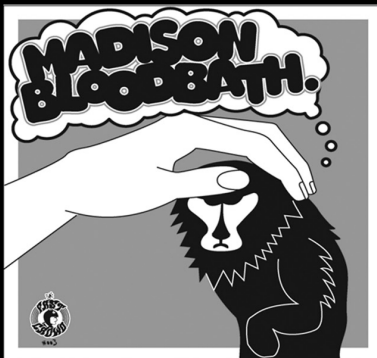
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"We can sit around and complain about it or we can just call it a loss, pick up and settle into another neighborhood."

Hollywood Is Dead. Long Live Chinatown.

I was midway through my first semester of the third year of college when I stumbled into the tiny West Hollywood bar. I had just followed the directions that the promoter had given me when our former club of residence was shut down by the fire marshal and we had to change locations a few short hours before my set time. It was on Santa Monica Boulevard near La Brea, what was then the shady part of West Hollywood, a good two miles away from the clubs frequented by the boys with chiseled faces and crisp white T-shirts. We found the space without problem and scored a parking spot in the loading zone. I played my set on a system roughly the same size as a small bookcase. It was pitch black in the booth and stuffy. It was as hot as an August warehouse rave, which was odd considering that this was a goth club in October. After I finished, a band started to play as loud and ethereal as any band that appealed to college kids in the 1990s. The music hit me in waves, rocking me back and forth until I thought I might fall over. I collapsed into the friend with the same name as my own. She caught me and shouted over the music, "Lizzie! You're burning up!" I kept muttering things about being okay and I had to get back to the DJ booth, but the other Lizzie and the promoters thought otherwise. I lost the argument while trying to prop myself up with a bar rail and Lizzie II loaded me and my gear into my car and drove a sick, motionless lump back to the dorms. I woke up the next morning with a persistent, unexplainable itch under my arms, a blazing irritation in my throat and a fever that would not break. Then I spent the next week or so at my parents' house with a gnarly case of the chicken pox.

Such was my first memory of The Tempest. In retrospect, it remains one of the most humiliating moments of my life (who the hell gets chicken pox at the age of twenty while spinning Skinny Puppy records inside a goth club?). Yet, despite the fact that my experience at a club inevitably forms a permanent impression of the venue, I grew to love The Tempest.

For ten years, I went to The Tempest at least twice a month. Sometimes, I came to DJ. Mostly, though, I showed up just to hang out with my friends, dance to my DJ buddies'

choice Britpop and indie rock cuts, and drink Johnny's excellent vodka tonics. Out on the smoking patio, we spent years watching the neighborhood change. The hooker-heeled brawls in the middle of the intersection slowly gave way to a line of Hummers and Hummer limos trudging towards the new starlet-friendly bars down the street. There was a change happening in West Hollywood. The Parlour, where I DJed throughout the duration of its existence, folded, leaving a glut of artists and random WeHo barhoppers in the dust. In its place now stands a vodka bar hosting the please-get-me-on-Perez-Hilton crowd. A few doors down from The Parlour, Spike, once the most notorious gay bar in town, reinvented itself as Winston's, which draws straight, undernourished girls and their stylists.

Last month, I found out that The Tempest was sold. Underground, the Friday night party that dominated the bar, is moving to The Echo, far enough east to escape the glitz and gridlock that has now become Hollywood and West Hollywood after dark.

Shortly after the news traveled through the club MySpace lines, I learned that Velvet, which had been functioning every Sunday night since 1994 inside a dance club three streetlights away from The Tempest, was closing. I hadn't been to the West Hollywood party in at least five years, but there was still a sting that came along with the closing night flyer. In the mid-1990s, Velvet was like something out of a Midwest talk show or local news expose on what the damned kids are doing these days. Platforms were no lower than three inches off the floor and make-up was applied with the heavy hand of a Miss Universe contestant. The outfits were brightly colored and generally featured several varieties of fake dead animal. As for us ladies, well, we all just kind of looked like Winona Ryder before her split from Johnny Depp. Every time I think about Velvet now, I can only think of a glittering, heavily perfumed mass moving to songs I hated—that one about Kentucky Fried Chicken and the one where the processed voice shrieks "cau-ause it's ho-o-ot" and that *Grease* mega-

mix. But, even if the music had the tendency to drive me nuts, I knew that the DJs would play Tori Amos getting all house diva on us and a few Duran Duran and Soft Cell songs and, inevitably, they would kick us out of the club with the theme from the Main Street Electrical Parade. Velvet's era had long since passed, but knowing that the club was actually closing was a sign of something far greater.



Photo by Kris Tripplair

Hollywood is dead. The gasping, final-moment breaths that grew shorter and shallower over the past five years have been all but extinguished. We might as well pull the plug on the few F-list friendly establishments in the area now and save everyone the misery of having to pay ten dollars or more to park just so we can dodge paparazzi and tourist-related camera flashes that aren't meant for us. Club London, the Sunday night '80s party, had the right notion when it left Boardner's, one block south of the Walk of Fame, for Friday night digs at Roberto's, the best damn sports bar in all of Chinatown.

For the past two years, Chinatown has become to me what Hollywood and West Hollywood were so many years ago. After sunset, we can walk the almost-empty streets past buildings that are about as old as any in Los Angeles can be and spy on characters who we might not actually want to encounter. The parking is cheap, if we have to pay at all,

and the clubs are so close together that we can walk to three different parties on a Saturday night. Chinatown feels like a real city, where the Hollywoods are like some cross between Oscar night and Disneyland.

In Chinatown, we generally hit up one (or more) of three spaces. There is the Mountain Bar, where we have felt the sweat of aging indie rockers as we tried to catch a glimpse of hardcore soul dude Ian Svenonius reading from a little pink tome titled *The Psychic Soviet* and where we saw two former Berliners jump on a bar and go-go dance along to their own songs at the end of a performance. There is the Grandstar Jazz Club, which actually does feature jazz music, although I have mostly attended for purposes of international pop and weird electronic music. Finally, there is the aforementioned Roberto's, which has become a second home for nearly every thirty-year-old ex-goth in Los Angeles. At Roberto's, I have been able to see everyone from the Bubonic Plague, a band whose laconic

delivery of Throbbing Gristle-style electronic music is so lacking in mass appeal that I can't help but call it one of my favorites, to the Autumns, who I dare to say is quite simply the most breathtaking (and underappreciated) band to ever emerge from Los Angeles. Add to this DJs who mix up faded goth club hits with songs from the Teutonic underground that even I can't find, and Roberto's has easily become my favorite hangout.

The dives that we frequented for years will turn into guest list-only venues and we will grow weary before anyone has a chance to tell us that we are no longer allowed inside while wearing Chuck Taylors. This much is inevitable. We can sit around and complain about it or we can just call it a loss, pick up and settle into another neighborhood, allowing new midnight memories to become part of the design of some previously ignored neighborhood.

—Liz Ohanesian

The hooker-heeled brawls in the middle of the intersection slowly gave way to a line of Hummers and Hummer limos.





Congratulations Jim and Nuvia

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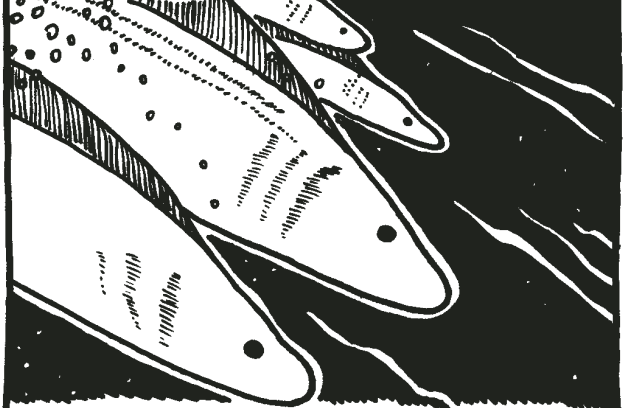


AMBULOCETUS: A WHALE WHO COULD ACTUALLY CRAWL OUT OF THE WATER AND WALK ON DRY LAND.



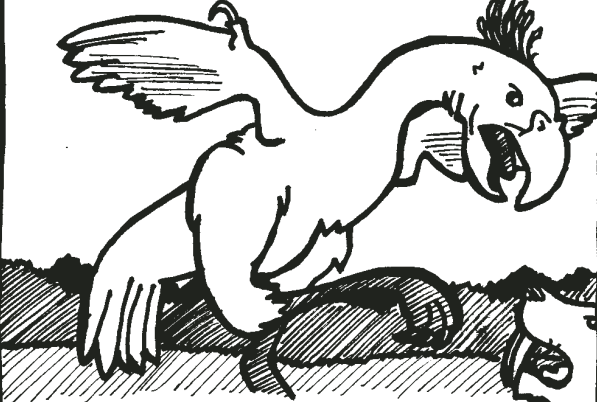
EARLY EXAMPLE OF ANIMALIA RISING UP, REJECTING THEIR ASCRIBED SPECIES ROLES, AND LIVING LIFE ON THEIR OWN TERMS.

HAIKOUICHTHYS: PREHISTORIC FISH WHICH PROTECTED ITSELF FROM ATTACK BY SWIMMING IN SCHOOLS OF HUNDREDS.



THIS WAS ABOUT 535 MILLION YEARS BEFORE THE "CREW" WAS INVENTED.

PHORUSRHACOS: A BIRD. AND YOU THINK, "OH, SOME PUSSY BIRD'S GONNA MAKE A NICE MEAL FOR A SABOR-TOOTH TIGER." AND THEN THE PHORUSRACOS TOTALLY EATS HIM FIRST!



400,000 YEARS LATER, BIG BOYS' GAY FRONT-MAN CHUCK BISCUIT WOULD GO ON STAGE IN DRAG AND BEAT UP REDNECKS WHO CAME IN AND CALLED HIM A FAGGOT.

KOOLASUCHUS: BEACH-DWELLING AMPHIBIAN KNOWN FOR CAMPING MOTIONLESS IN MUD AND RELYING ON THINGS WALKING BY FOR FOOD.



ANYONE WHO'S SPENT A TANGEABLE AMOUNT OF TIME ON TELEGRAPH AVE IN BERKELEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND EASILY WHERE THIS CREATURE'S INFLUENCE ENDED UP.

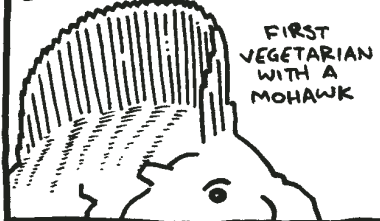
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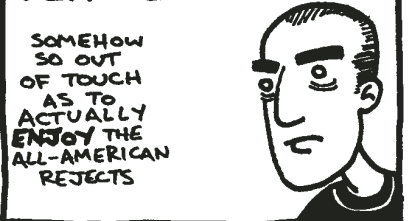
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SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

**“A manual
for how to
do nothing.”**

Liquor, Tobacco, Model Glue, and Teen Princesses

First off, I would like to take the opportunity to say hello to my friend “Big” Frank and say sorry it took ten years. The other day, I’d just finished playing golf with my dad and some of his friends—mind you they’re all pretty much retired and staunch Republicans—and one of the guys pipes up with, “Dontcha think that the Hilton girl is getting a raw deal?” Perplexed as I was, I replied, “If it were you or I, we would have been sent straight to jail and had to wait a while to be turned loose.” On top of that, she shows up late for her court date and then sasses the judge.

So, my question is, “Does privilege and money change the way some are treated?” According to the guy I’m sharing a beer with, the answer is yes. But I don’t think so.

Seeing that this country is based on equality, she should get the same cold, vomit-infested cell as the rest of us would get, but that won’t happen because the fear is some less fortunate inmate will kick her ass. It’s what she needs, seeing that no one else is curbing her appetite for free recklessness.

This also goes for the rest of these teen princesses. Just this morning, there was a list of teenage celebrities that have been spotted in rooftop clubs, boozing it up. Now, if I have to be responsible as a grocery clerk checking IDs for liquor, tobacco, model glue, and an assortment of over the counter drugs, these bars or so called nightclubs should get a big old fine for serving to minors also. If the paparazzi knows the whereabouts of these stars, I’m sure ATF knows too.

Digging deeper, does this correlate to the gap this country is widening between the high and low classes? If the unknown Joe gets thrown in jail with little to do and the celebrity gets to take a few photos, sign some autographs, and drive away with a slap, I would say yes. There is no gray (middle class) anymore; it’s pretty much black and white issues. I once read where democracies will never stick around because they run themselves into the ground. In order to stay rich, organizations need to raise revenue, so that there is a small class of elite and a large class of poor. Pretty soon, the whole thing collapses.

This is evident in the fact that America produces fewer and fewer goods, because

they are becoming more and more expensive than goods that are brought in from over seas. This illegal aliens thing is for the birds, too. What would one have to pay for a strawberry if all the natives south of the border were sent back and some Stanford student was picking the fields? Would the city of Cerritos keep narrowing roadways to stick in grassy medians if there wasn’t a crew of workers who get paid less than minimum wage to clip the grass, close down a lane on Thursdays, and enjoy hour-long lunch breaks, while traffic slows? I don’t see that happening.

Is there an answer to this madness? Years ago we were told to look for the “Made in America” patch, but if I go shopping I can’t find one. I can boycott watching the stars’ movies, or not read the scandal rags, but that won’t really stop things. So do I wait until the whole thing falls apart and run to the hills screaming WOLVERINES! Or, in my case, MATADORES!? I’ll take a cut in pay if people will lower my house payment, my utilities, the cost of food, and so on if we would start making more goods in this country once again, but hey that’s my pipe dream. If anyone has some good ideas, send them to the magazine or any of the email addresses, I’ll bundle them up and send them to the capitol building. Let’s see were that lands me.

SKETCH STANCE 2 COLOURING ZINE

By Russ Hell

Coloring books for punkers; what a novel idea. At first, I thought this was silly, but the more I leafed through it the more I chuckled and thought, “I remember those lyrics,” and “How could I color that character?” This one is pages of short lyrics with a character—close in identity to the lyrics underneath—for the reader to color. It all helps in deciding a color palette. For instance, Jello Biafra: “You’re dressed up like a clown, putting on your act. It’s the only time of the year you’ll admit to that,” and then underneath there is some guy dressed in a cat costume for the reader to color. What fun this one is and there are four other copies in print when you color up the first issue. (weaselvx@hotmail.com)

EVIL NACHO POSTCARDS FROM HOME

By Luke Palermo

I received an Eville comic awhile back and had mixed feelings for it. I remember liking the writing, the visual was weird. I guess that is part of the Evil makeup. I’m not sure if it’s because I’ve been on vacation for two weeks and haven’t gone anywhere, but this comic made me giggle. This is all about telling a fib to fellow workers about vacation when really one stays at home and does nothing. Actually, it is written as a manual for how to do nothing. My favorite part is activities, where you can go in the backyard and dig for souvenirs from the trip, or empty out ice trays on the stairs and go snowboarding. I really enjoyed the trip. Thanks, Evil Nacho. (www.lukepalermo.com)000

BACK IN BLECK

By Johnny Ryan

A collection of Ryan’s character Blecky Yuckerella is what I have in my hands and I really have to have an open mind. The comics are drawn in the same manner as the humor: crude! It’s not to say that the comics aren’t funny, they are, but they give that “you better wash your hands after reading this stuff” vibe, even if you just got it off the shelf. A lot of farting, barfing, and butt picking go on in the pages of this comic, so be prepared to dumb yourself up before viewing. (www.fantagraphics.com, www.johnnyr.com)

CASTLE WAITING #2 & #3

By Linda Medley

If you’re into knights, castles, and all that mystic stuff then you’ll love this comic, because it has plenty of little folks. It is a little hard to follow—maybe because there are only the two books—but the story seems to end and then pick back up in one book and carry through in the next. Not a whole lot of action going on, but I think for right now they’re just introducing characters. We’ll have to see in forthcoming books. (www.fantagraphics.com)

I KEE YOU

A Collection of Overheards

This book fucking rules! Why someone

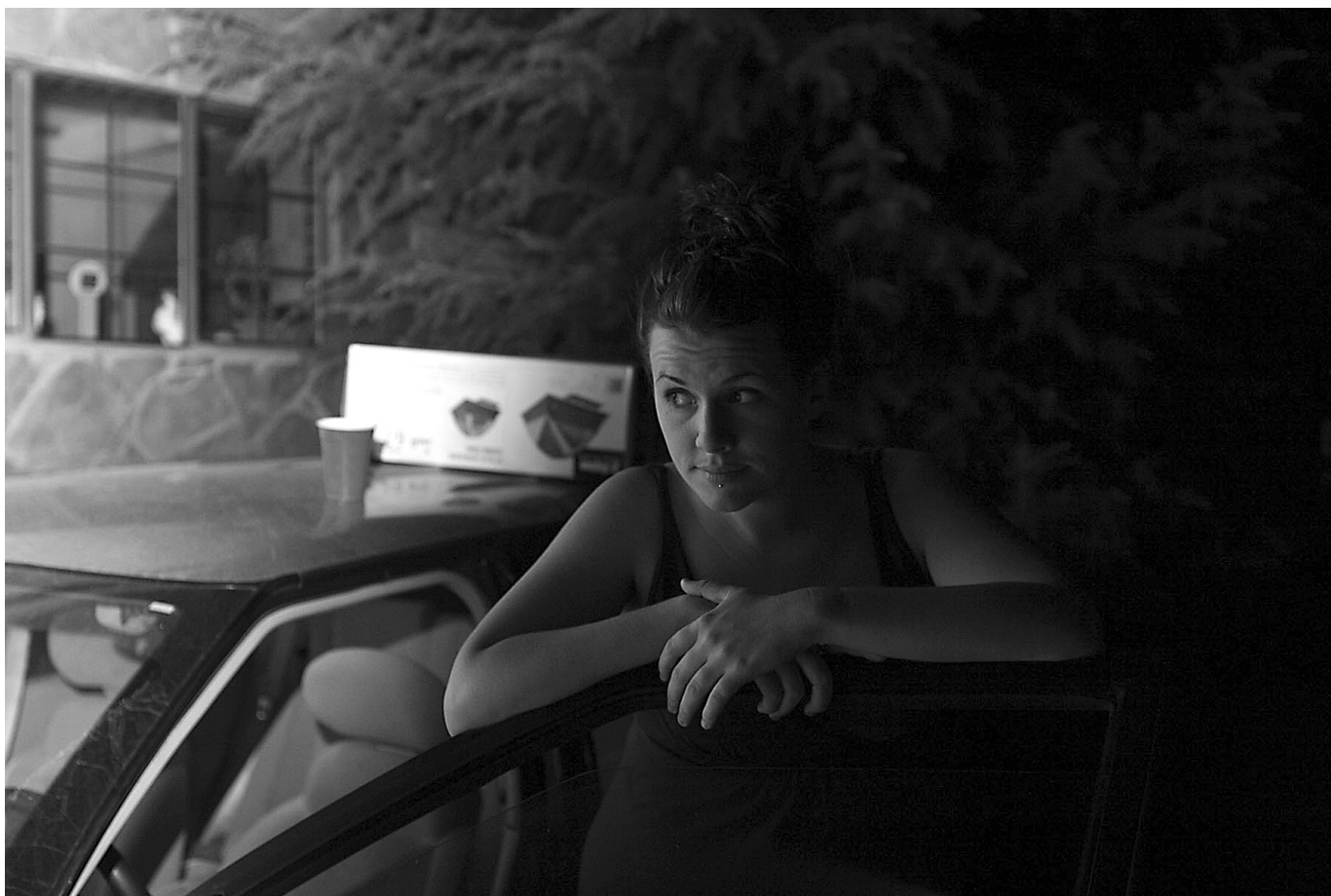


Photo by Will Kwiatkowski

There is no gray anymore; it is pretty much black and white issues.

didn't think of this earlier, I don't know. I can't tell you how many times the same situations that are here in this book have happened to me. The conversations of drunks, stupid people, those of us who get plain angry and sputter nonsense, it's all here documented for us to laugh at. I just can't believe that it's not thicker. It is also nice to see that Brian Ralph is still producing (*Cave In* is still my all-time favorite comic). I find this similar to an idea I had for a collection of stupid things written on bathroom stall walls. Here is how it works. You know when you're standing in a line and you overhear someone talking or complaining and their reasoning is beyond absurd? Well, it's all been captured by various writers and illustrated by some of the best. The really cool thing is that it is viewed by more than just one person. It gives it that feeling that we all watch and hear the world stumble. I was sharing pages at a time with my wife, my brother, and anyone else who wanted to laugh. This book has got to make people use

discretion. I said it once before; this book fucking rules!
(www.atomicbookcompany.com)

BRAIN FOOD #13

By Mike Toft

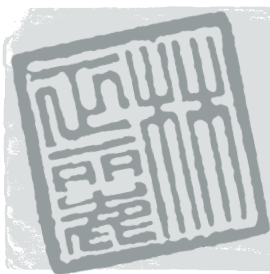
There's nothing like a futuristic, politically fueled comic to start your morning! This is the strangest collection of characters I've seen in the pages of a series comic. We start with this balding, middle aged, corporate guy in jail with a punk rock guy and they happen to be there because the bald guy started a fight at the other's concert. The bald guy is bailed out of jail by some whacked-out corporation that is trying to reanimate consumers that failed and they're making a deal with Wal-Mart to use them as janitors. Really they're just a bunch of zombies. The Christian Right comes in to free the janitors and they get killed by the zombies. Actually, it's much funnier than my brief explanation. The author also has his own bitch section and, boy, does he get political. Overall, this comic

delivers some funny blows to some goofball organizations and I loved it. Hey Mike, keep churning this stuff out will ya.
(miketoft@usfamily.net)

FUN TIME COMICS #5

Various writers

This one was a hard read with the entire street lingo used throughout. I thought it was going to be good with a character called Bowling Ball Head, but the fact that he kept saying "word" was irritating. Actually, most of the magazine's artwork has this hippie psychedelic feel mixed with this futuristic street syntax. It was all too much to take in. It feels like this comic is stuck somewhere between too cultured and too raw. I have two other issues and I'm hoping for better things. It just didn't make me laugh and, at the same time, I really wasn't enlightened. This one is just not my cup of coffee. It's just a speed-readers delight. (Madison Underground Press, www.buddhafart.com)



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

“Reasons Why My VaChina is Depressed Due to Lack of Social Activity”

Feng Shui For Your Cooter

There are a few things in life that I know and understand with great certainty and conviction.

1. Sparks will make your vomit orange.
2. Riding a bike is better than driving a car.
3. I'll never get laid in China.

Tons of ex-pats can get booty in the Middle Kingdom. They're mostly of the straight, white, entitled male type who may or may not have paid for said sex, but at least they're getting some. I'm more of the Asian-American, bespectacled, tattooed, weighing more than one hundred pounds, obnoxious, loud-mouthed, girl variety—and that hasn't bode well for my sex life. And it blows. Not in the oral sexual kinda way, or else I wouldn't be writing this shiz.

In the States, I had some semblance of *game*. Let's say I'm at a party; I could Sharpie™ “Let's Make Out” on the palm of my hand, flash it to as many pairs of eyes as possible until someone thinks, “I've got nothing else to do, why not?” We find a dark corner to get our mack, on, with breaks in between our makeout session to refill our plastic cup before the keg's tapped. A good ol' fashioned we-got-drunk-at-a-house-show-and-totally-sucked-face story. Warms my heart and I miss it so.

In China, I can barely articulate myself when I'm out shopping, so negotiating a hook-up is nearly impossible. I don't know the rules, so I can't play the game. I need help from something beyond a Mandarin phrasebook. I need a yin for my yang.

Feng shui is the old school Chinese art of laying out and arranging buildings and rooms for the proper flow of qi (energy). It is a belief that the orientation of objects and living spaces can positively influence your life by creating a harmonious yin-yang balance through the movement of qi. For example, one of the basic guidelines to optimize proper qi movement is to avoid having the front and back doors aligned because the qi will shoot right through your house. Instead, you want qi to cycle through slowly, so that the goodness will hang out and flow around for a while. Another rule is that chairs and sofas should not be placed with their backs to windows, as that will leave you vulnerable to attacks. Attacks from what? I dunno, but you don't wanna funk with Chinese voodoo.

New age yuppies spend fistfuls of cash for gurus to come to their homes and offices to move furniture around. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of interior design zen.

Since I'm Asian, one might assume that my kung fu is unbeatable, my va-jay-jay is slanted, and that I'm an innate feng shui practitioner. While all of the above is true, my feng shui skills are actually pretty weak, as exemplified by my inability to get someone to stick their qi in me.

Although, I'm no feng shui master, I have learned plenty about what *not* to do if one wanted to achieve carnal pleasure in China. In the spirit of human enlightenment, I present to you *Amy Adoyzie's Feng Shui for Your Cooter (or Reasons Why My VaChina is Depressed Due to Lack of Social Activity)*.

I am Chinese-American.

In *mei guo* (America), there's a brethren of brothas and sistas who are afflicted with yellow fever—which means that they would all find me undeniably adorable and irresistible based solely on my ethnicity. Racist fetishism aside, it meant guaranteed bootay across the U.S.A. However, in a country with 1.3 billion Chinesies, my Asianness is a hindrance.

Due to the one-child policy and preference for sons, many baby girls were victims of infanticide and this caused a massive imbalance between the genders. Even though Chinese women my age are at a premium, I'm still denied because of Americaness. My American passport is intimidating because this is very much a patriarchal society, and a Chinese dude doesn't want a girl who'll tell them to fuck off because she'd rather be in America where there's freedom of speech and junk.

I'm a total nerd.

Punk rock librarians and indie-pop bartenders might list geekery and bookishness as turn-ons, but the general Chinese population would disagree. I prefer my horn-rimmed eyeglasses over eyeliner, my SPF15 lip balm over lip gloss, my old-school American-made Vans over uncomfortable sparkly heels. I'm pretty lo-fi and it takes me all of fifteen minutes to get ready.

I'd rather spend hours perusing Wikipedia to find obscure facts about cancelled television shows and Mitch

Hedberg quotes than investing energy on primping and plucking so's that other people can judge me based on how every strand of hair is in its place.

Chinese people are all about appearances and putting on a good front. The expanding Chinese middle class likes to show off their expendable income with tailored clothes and flat-iron hair. The women are so obsessed with making sure everything is in its place that they straighten their straight black hair.

No thanks.

The extent of my hair regiment involves shampoo and conditioner, rinse, and repeat.

I've got a few tattoos.

Generally speaking, the only types of Chinese women who have tattoos are prostitutes or freak shows. While I will admit to being a little bit of both, I have never been paid for sex nor have I ever belonged to a traveling circus. As far as the Chinese are concerned, I obviously have no respect for myself and my body to permanently scar it with beautiful pieces of art that have deep meaning to me.

Chinese standards of beauty prize pale skin and there's a whole industry of skin-lightening making billions of yuan based off of self-hate and the theory that only working class folks are dark, and no one wants to be working class. Even freckles are frowned upon and are regarded as facial blemishes rather than as adorable lil' love specks that God sprinkled on our beautiful faces. One can imagine that if those are the standards by which I am measured, my olive, freckly, tattooed ass isn't being scouted for modeling campaigns.

I weigh more than a hundred pounds.

I've been lucky in that I was born and raised in a first-world nation, a country that is bulging with an obesity epidemic, and where competitive eating is considered a sport. I'm no waif, nor am I built like a brick shithouse. I'm the proud owner of a beer belly, but I can still fit comfortably into a youth large T-shirt. And I've got booty to boot. In the States, my 5'1" frame is considered a small/medium, but in China I've grown to gargantuan proportions and the only clothes that will fit me usually bear two letters: X and L.

The Chinese do not regard heftiness as a sign of wealth, like you're fat because



you can afford to sit on your ass all day rather than hauling buckets of dirt on your shoulders. Instead, it is viewed as more of a failure in self-control and the inability to endure hunger. Chinese peeps are good at suffering. If it ain't state-sanctioned starving via the Cultural Revolution, it's 21st Century image-conscious deprivation in order to shrink themselves away.

Chi ku. Eat bitter. It's a staple in the Chinese diet. It means to just grin and bear it, you're shit outta luck and that life is hard, so just deal with it.

I'd prefer an In N' Out grilled cheese sandwich and a real ice cream chocolate milkshake. I don't think I'll ever adapt to the bitter diet.

I enjoy being obnoxious and loud.

For all the shit that I've talked during my short adult life, I'm surprised I haven't been treated to a royal ass-whoopin'. Like the time I was at house party for a girl who was trying to raise money for some medical bills and I was gauche enough to say that she looked like *Faces of Meth*. Or when asked about whether I would ever do the nasty with one of our fellow teachers, I said *only if I were blind and couldn't say no*. Or the other time when I told the Modern Machines that they were *hit or miss*.

The junk that comes stumbling out of my mouth can only be described as rude,

Who am I, a Chinese- American girl, to find pleasure from fucking?!

How dare I know what I want and then ask for it?

uncouth, or total bullshit. But I secretly enjoy being an asshole because it cracks my friends up, and if I'm anything—I'm a good friend.

It's unfortunate that the Chinese are not privy to my swearword-laden missives and ridiculous sense of humor. Words like *douchebaggery* and *cumrag* don't translate well, so all my witticisms are lost on their yellow ears and all they hear is gobbly-gook. How am I supposed the charm the pants off the Chinesies if they can't understand me?

And it's not ladylike to laugh out loud, an activity that I wholeheartedly endorse. It's offensive that girls are told to suppress their joy and cover their mouths should a giggle emerge. I can't imagine never laughing so hard that you can't breathe, your cheeks hurt and your belly is sore afterwards. But that type of physical manifestation of happiness is considered a grotesque display.

If unabashed expression of ridiculous amounts of joy is ugly, then I'm hideous.

I am a girl.

Who am I, a *Chinese-American* girl, to find pleasure from fucking?! How dare I know what I want and then ask for it? Wait, I'm not a virgin?!

* * *

Luckily, all of this will be a distant memory in a couple months. My *game* will be restored once the custom officials pound my passport with a Chinese departure stamp. I shall return to the land of plenty and grab me a piece of certifiable American ass.

My cooter doesn't need feng shui. It needs to go home.

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com



the
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Heartsick



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Whoa Oh
RECORDS

HEY FATASS! CHECK OUT SNAKEPIT'S TOP TEN RESTAURANTS ★ in the ★ UNITED ★ STATES

10 THE LONGHORN
IN CHATTANOOGA, TN IS
A CLASSIC GREASY
SPOON FROZEN IN TIME.
BIG
ASS
BREAKFAST
FOR
TWO
BUCKS!

9 A LADDIN'S IN
RICHMOND, VA HAS BOTH
FALAFEL + PIZZA, SO OF
COURSE THEY HAVE A
FALAFEL PIZZA. \$\$\$
2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64 66 68 70 72 74 76 78 80 82 84 86 88 90 92 94 96 98 100
IT'S GOT EGGS, PLANT, + FOO!

8 CHAPALA IN AUSTIN
TX SERVES TRADITIONAL
JALISCO-STYLE MEXICAN
FOOD. CHEAP AS HELL!
I
RECOMMEND
THE EXCELLENT
MILANESA

7 ODESSA IN TOMPKINS
SQUARE, NYC IS OPEN 24
HOURS AND HAS "DISCO
FRIES"
OP // FRIES // OP

6 THE SILVER DOLLAR
DINER IN ASHEVILLE, NC
HASNT CHANGED THEIR
MENU SINCE THE 70'S. TRY
THE \$3 PORK CHOP!
I CANT BELIEVE THEY
HAVE 'SANKA' ON THE
MENU!
IS THAT A
CIGARETTE
MACHINE?

5 SULTAN'S MARKET IN
CHICAGO HAS THE BEST
FALAFEL I'VE EVER HAD IN
MY LIFE, AND I'VE EATEN
FALAFEL ON 3 CONTINENTS!
THE
GREATEST
FALAFEL
ON
EARTH!

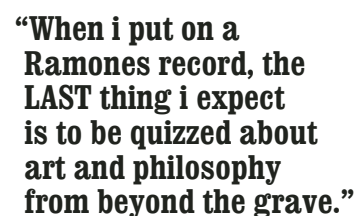
4 POKEZ IN SAN
DIEGO IS AWESOME,
DESPITE WHAT DAVEY
TILT WHEEL THINKS!
THE
WAITRESS
HAD A
NICKY
TATTOO!

3 SLUGGOS IS HEAVEN
ON EARTH, RIGHT IN PENSACOLA
FLORIDA. ITS ALL VEGAN!
ITS ALL CHEAP! ITS ALL
DELICIOUS!
RYAN
GREENSBORO,
THE FRIENDLY
BARKEEP

2 TRIPLE ROCK SOCIAL
CLUB IN MINNEAPOLIS
IS LIKE SLUGGOS, BUT ALL
FATTENED UP ON BACON
MARTINIS. //
AND IT'S
OWNED BY
ERIK
FROM
DILLINGER4!

1 TAMALE HOUSE
IN AUSTIN TX.
THEY GOT THIS SHIT
CALLED "MIGAS". IT IS
THE BEST THING I HAVE
EVER EATEN.

EURP
BON APETIT!



"Down at Lulu's" by the Ohio Express is "The bass keeps bumpin' / Everybody's jumpin' / The drummer keeps beatin' / Everybody's MEETIN' down at Lulu's"??? I've owned that record since 1978, and i've always thought it was *The drummer keeps beatin' / Everybody's EATIN' down at Lulu's*! Well i never! So, yeah: Two-and-one-quarter minutes into the song, Joey Ramone, from beyond the grave, clearly intones "WHAT IS MINIMALISM?" It's weird. Maybe i am unable to properly convey the degree of weirdness that this discovery instills in me. I dunno. All i know is that i've owned this record for twenty-eight years, and one day, out of a clear blue metaphorical sky, i hear the voice of a dead guy asking me what the fuck minimalism is in the middle of it. I dunno about you, but when i put on a Ramones record, pretty much the LAST thing i expect is to be suddenly quizzed about art and philosophy from beyond the grave. ***IT'S A STYLE OR TECHNIQUE (AS IN MUSIC, DESIGN, OR LITERATURE) THAT IS CHARACTERIZED BY EXTREME SPARENESS AND SIMPLICITY!!! LEAVE ME BE, SPECTRE, LEAVE ME BE!!! AIIIIIEEEEEERRRRRHHHHH!!!*** Okay... i think i've made my peace with this and am now moving on. Thanks for your patience)), but the whole "Let's Shake" / "Shake Together Tonite"/"Frantic Romantic" conundrum moved into an entirely new realm when, upon my daily pre-work combing of

OBSERVATION #1: SHAKING INVOLVES WIGGLING!

at the studio [[Wait, stop, one moment, Rev. Nørb! Do you mean to suggest that – GASP! – live recordings of bands are occasionally tampered with in the studio??? **THAT LIVE RECORDS ARE NOT ALWAYS COMPLETELY ON THE VERITABLE UP AND UP??? Ack!!! Thpht!!! Eek!!! SAY IT AIN'T SO!!!** What's next, casting aspersions on the veracity of the Great Pumpkin???]]. I mean, since i've been doing the majority of my rocking on headphones, i've noticed TONS of shit that i never noticed before. Like, did you know that the chorus of

my kitchen cupboards for yet more CDs to haul to work and listen to ((Yes. Kitchen cupboards are for CDs, not utensils nor food. I dedicate one half of one cupboard to dishes, one half of one cupboard to food, and two full cupboards to CDs. If i could find a less intrusive place to keep the dishes and food, i'd do it)), i came across the Radio Reelers "Shakin' at the Party" CD. If memory serves, it was, in fact, the Radio Reelers who, with heavily shake-o-centric songs like "Shakin' at the Party" and "S-H-A-K-E-I-T," caused me to contemplate with all due pedanticism

what exactly “shaking” constituted. I mean, what IS this “*shaking*” that all the kids dig? Is it like freaking? Busking? Shaving? I mean, it appears to be generally cast in a positive light: The Radio Reelers compel their audiences to “S-H-A-K-E-I-T” ((*gesundheit!*)); Teenage Head invite the fans to “shake,” presumably, with the band themselves; and the Scientists go everyone one better, and suggest that the “shaking” be taken care of “TONITE!” But, i mean, what exactly gets shook here? *A booty? A moneymaker? A long-lost shaker of salt?* There are, of course, plenty of songs that specify shaking *something* ((usually, once pruned of all metaphorical gobbledygook and secret code, presumed to be one’s fanny)) – James & Bobby Purify’s “Shake a Tail Feather,” KC & The Sunshine Band’s “Shake Your Booty,” “Shake Your Rump” by the Beastie Boys, etc. etc. – but, in my humble opinion, the all-important SHAKING that the Scientists and Teenage Head and the Radio Reelers purvey seems to be a verb that does not take a direct object – a SHAKING not restricted to rump localization, but an all-pervasive, ALL-OVER SHAKING that sorts of floats around the atmosphere, like ROCKING, or the Holy Spirit, or something. This, of course, cannot help but point us in the direction of the legendary “Shakin’ All Over” by Johnny Kidd & The Pirates – after all, it is only right and just to assume that an “ALL-OVER SHAKING” and “Shakin’ All Over” are one and the same. But, soft! Is this truly the case? We *assume* that the reflexive axiom carries over from mathematics to shaking, but have we rigorous proof of this? *I say thee NAY!* The “shakin’” implied in “Shakin’ All Over” is of the “shivers in the thighbone” and “shakes in the knee bone” variety – it is a trembling, a quivering, a physical shivering. It is the same type of “shakin’” that Mojo Nixon related to us in Scripture ((i.e., Rock)) when he found himself “shakin’ an’ bakin’ an’ quakin’” in front of the King of the Unfree Cow World in the song “Mushroom Maniac” – an involuntary response of the autonomic nervous system to certain fear- or anxiety-inducing phenomena – whereas, clearly, the SHAKING hinted at by the Radio Reelers and Teenage Head and Scientists is an at least semi-voluntary activity, one that participants

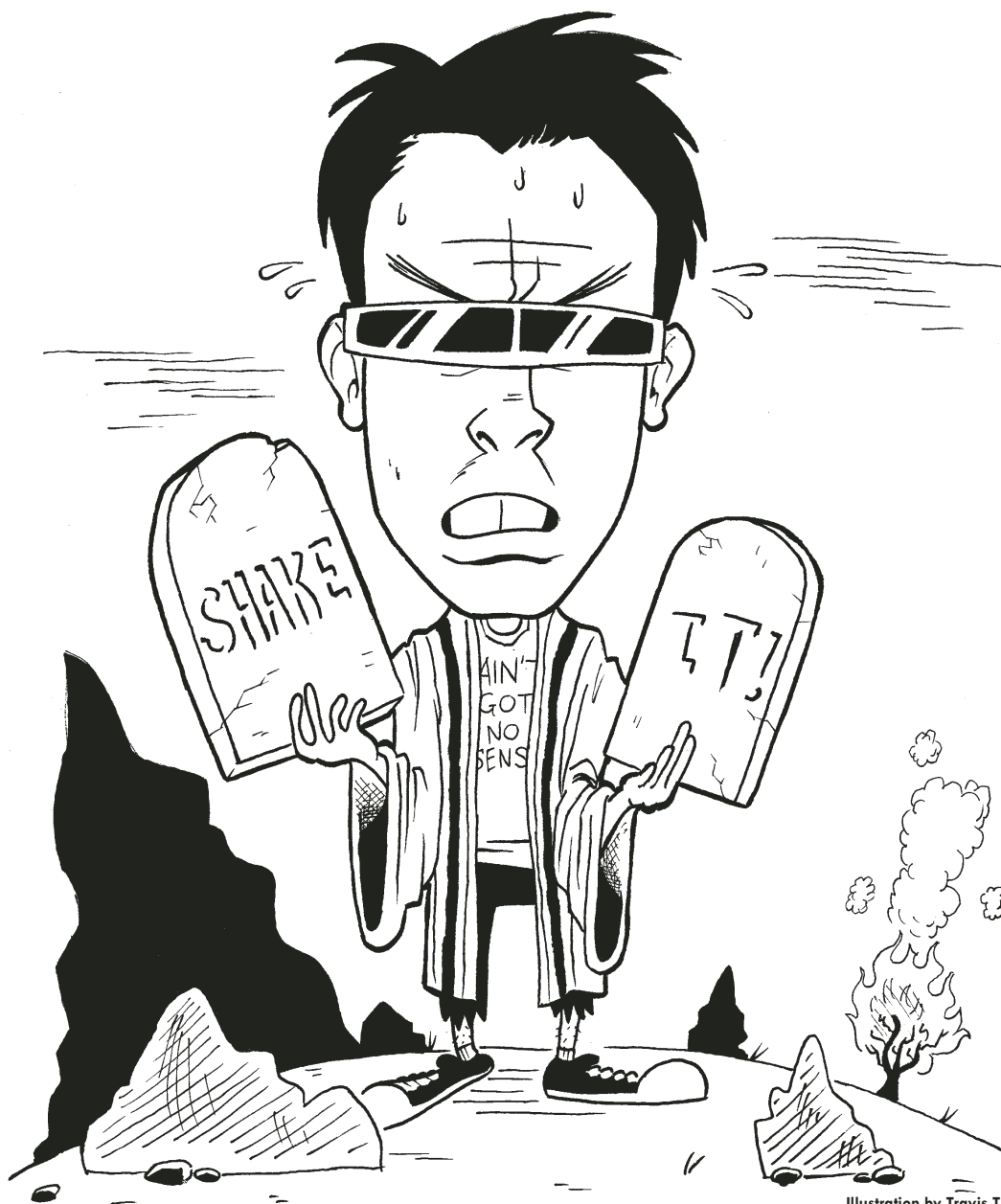


Illustration by Travis T.

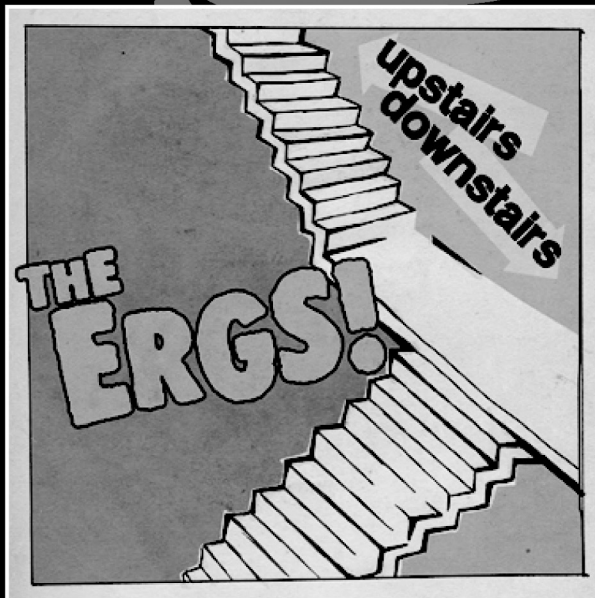
OBSERVATION #2: SHAKING DOES NOT INVOLVE SOUP!

make at least a partially conscious effort to enter into. Shaking as mere shivering/trembling/quivering, then, is also exhibited in The Now’s “Shiver and Shake” Now’s ((i THINK it was The Now... i’m too lazy to go dig out the record...)) and the Figgs’ “Sit and Shake”; these are fine songs but not the droids we’re looking for. We’re looking for something a little more primal... something a bit more all-encompassing than merely trembling, or shaking one’s heinie. The MC5’s “Shakin’ Street” seems to embody the right type of shaking; unfortunately, no

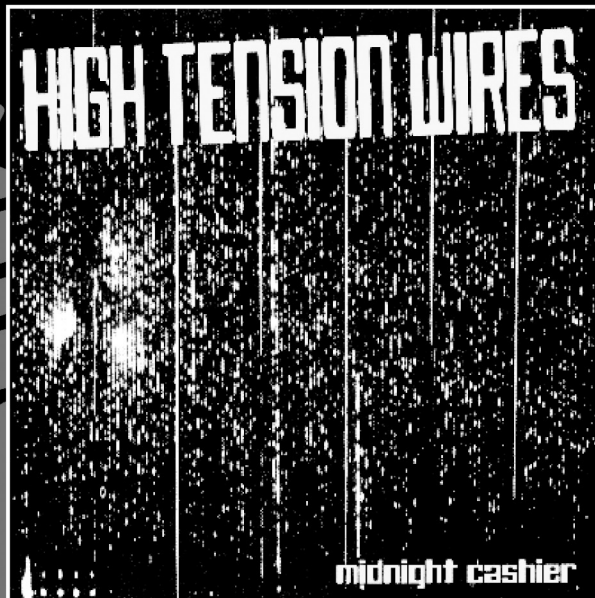
further data besides being where “all the kids meet” is really dispensed ((other than the fact that “you’ve got to get down,” which brings us back to that Teenage Head 45 again, and let us not go there, it is a silly place)). The Pop asked us, rhetorically, if it was “time to shake it up”; The Cars didn’t ask, but *told* us to “Shake It Up,” and John Felice of the Real Kids explained how he was “drivin’ around Boston, lookin’ for a place just to shake my ass” – yet none of these shakings seem properly intransitive, if’n you ask me. So, let us regress this matter to the days of yore:



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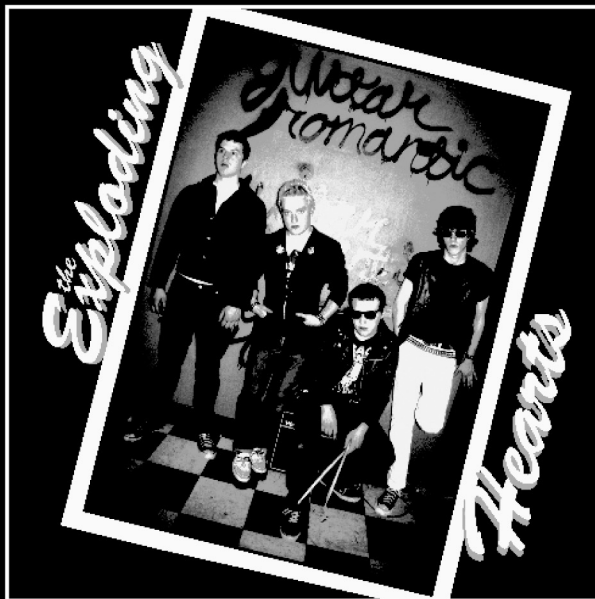


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OBSERVATION #3: SHAKING INVOLVES LUST!

What is the very earliest use of “shake” – in any sort of neo-rock-and-roll context – anyone here can think of? I think a fair answer to this is “Shake, Rattle and Roll” by Big Joe Turner in 1954 ((also cut shortly thereafter by Bill Haley & The Comets)); after all, nowhere in the song does it specify what is to be shaken. *DON’T ASK, JUS’ DO IT, WOMAN!!!* Heck, the reference to rattling the pots and pans wasn’t in the original song lyrics – maybe shaking AND rattling AND rolling could be some sort of unspecified holy trinity of mysterious and unquantifiable Rock Activities? ((i’ve had more than one person ask me to define what exactly constituted the “roll” part of “rock ‘n’ roll.” Although this is a fair question, it’s also too easy of a question for dipshits to think of and ask, so i refuse to answer it at present, or at least until somebody gets me a copy of that Bay City Rollers album with the aqua green cover)) *HA! Too easy!* A little quick research indicates that the phrase “Shake, Rattle & Roll” was originally the title of a 1919 song about dice gambling ((recorded by the presumably-immortal Alfred Bernard, who has yet to ask me any questions about minimalism)); and, whilst dice are, indeed, relatively dissimilar to a booty, the fact that SHAKING, in the context of also RATTLING and ROLLING, means shaking SOMETHING, as opposed to merely SHAKING, and disqualifies the shaking of “Shake, Rattle and Roll” from being the type of SHAKING of the S-H-A-K-E-I-T variety ((although, just between you and me, i have not rigorously proven the presumption that there is some sort of fatal contamination of the 1954 “Shake, Rattle and Roll” stemming from the 1919 “Shake, Rattle and Roll,” so if you want to attack my argument from that angle, have at it, i expose my flank to your vicious attack)). Moving a few years forward, Elvis’ “All Shook Up” could be reasonably dismissed as a description of the aftermath of the type of state brought about by the “Shakin’ All Over” type of shaking; however Chan Romero’s “Hippy Hippy Shake,” whilst obviously somehow involving a rump ((to the point where a fair amount of rock wags feel the song is some manner of occluded anal sex metaphor – “*I got it in the back*” et al)), seems to be more on point: One shakes it to the left, one shakes it to the right, one does the hippy shake shake with all their might, and so on and so forth. I mean, think about it: He can’t stand still ((because of the hippy hippy shake)), he gets his thrill ((also because of the hippy hippy shake)). We are not sure exactly what happens, but we know that the party in question moves to both the left and the right, can’t stand still, and gets a thrill. *WELL, IF THAT AIN’T SHAKING, BY GADFREY, I DON’T KNOW WHAT IS!!!* However, backing up slightly, it is fairly easy to see that the ONE REAL, TRUE,

UNCONTAMINATED BY BUTTS OR GAMBLING SHAKING makes its earliest ((that i can think of)) appearance in the Jerry Lee Lewis’ classic “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On” ((originally written by Dave “Curly” Williams and Sunny David, and recorded by a few folks prior to the Jerry Lee version we all know ‘n’ love)). I mean, let’s face it: All we know – and, quite frankly, all we NEED to know – is that the SHAKING is, in fact, going on, and there is a WHOLE LOT OF IT ((the information conveyed regarding chicken in the parlor, though pleasant, is superfluous to our scholarly excavations)). The listener is urged to “*shake it, baby, shake it*” and to “*shake it one time for me*” – with the only real clue dropped being the further request to “*wiggle around just a little bit.*” Now, while there is no smoking gun here ((highly unusual for a Jerry Lee Lewis case)) definitely LINKING the shaking to the wiggling around just a little bit, it IS, however, reasonable to speculate that shaking MIGHT, in fact, BE “wiggling around just a little bit!” THE PLOT

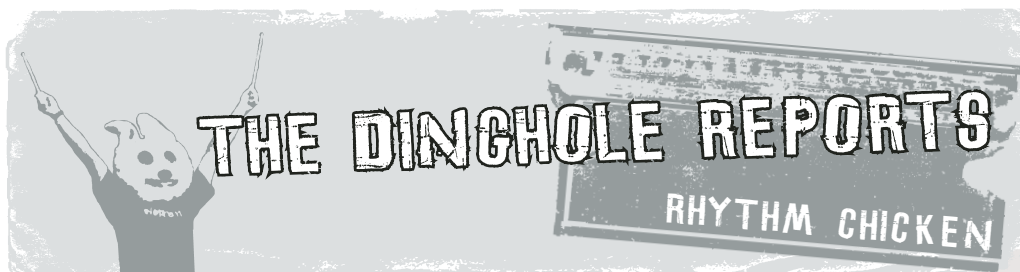
the pinnacle of shake-dom – the lyrics definitely indicate that the listener is being instructed in performing the steps of a dance of some kind ((but, i mean, what the hell IS this: “*Shake it like a bowl of soup / Everybody loop-de-loop*” Of all the things in this world that i might conceivably be inclined to shake, a bowl of fricking soup is not one of them. I mean, wouldn’t you just get soup all over your hands? And then you’re gonna loop-de-loop with the bowl of soup? Like how? Set the bowl into a very large sling made out of a tablecloth or something, and whirl it around so quickly that centrifugal force keeps the soup in the bowl? How is *that* sexy? And if the “it” to be shaken is, in fact, somebody’s butt, wouldn’t “shaking it like a bowl of soup” suggest that the shaker winds up with two arms full of diarrhea, suggesting a lyrical modification to “*shake it like a bowl of soup / coat your hands with liquid poop?*” ((and what kind of ass shakes like a bowl of soup anyway? John Felice’s?)) I don’t know about you, but i am inclined at this point to suggest that Otis Redding stick to activities he is more familiar with, such as sitting on docks of bays, and leave the shaking to the Shakers and other anal sex enthusiasts ((no reference to “Movers and Shakers” by the Clash is necessary here)) **OBSERVATION #2: SHAKING DOES NOT INVOLVE SOUP!**

OBSERVATION #4: SHAKING LEADS TO ACTION!

THICKENS! **OBSERVATION #1: SHAKING INVOLVES WIGGLING!** ((one supposes that it would be irresponsible to completely omit mention of the Protestant religious denomination known as “Shakers” here. However, since the Shakers were strict believers in celibacy, they REALLY aren’t the droids we’re looking for – unless, of course, they technically bypassed their sworn vows of celibacy by use of the ol’, uh, “Hippy Hippy Shake” workaroud, if you know what i mean. In which case, shake it one time for ol’ Jerry Lee!)). Now, it is important to note the time period of the “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On” type shaking, as, in the mid-’60s, there was, in fact, a dance called “The Shake” ((“*Stand with one foot firmly in front of the other, stretch your arms out and swing from side to side while nodding your head. Shake your upper body from the hips, occasionally jumping to one side or the other*”)) – meaning that any exhortation to “Shake!” might be, in fact, an assumed command to engage in the dance CALLED “The Shake,” which is probably not the droid we’re looking for, either, but i don’t really understand how to do the dance ((note clever Weirdos reference)) so i can’t really say for sure. All i know is that in Otis Redding’s “Shake” – held by many well-meaning-but-confused individuals as

However, the Shadows of Knight’s song of a few years later, also merely titled “Shake,” seems to be much more on track, mentioning girls with “eyes on the drummer and the guitar man” ((what, no be-antlered vocalist?)) while, thankfully, completely omitting all references to soups of any kind ((the reworking of “Shake” to “Latin Shake” by Lt. Garcia’s Magic Music Box will be conveniently ignored at this point)) **OBSERVATION #3: SHAKING INVOLVES LUST!** Finally, perhaps the high point of post-sixties shaking came in 1976, when the Flamin’ Groovies swore to “Shake Some Action,” thus: **OBSERVATION #4: SHAKING LEADS TO ACTION!** Therefore, as far as i can tell, “shaking” can be defined as a lustful, souplless wiggling that leads to ACTION! Now, if anybody knows what “action” is, please get in touch with me c/o *Razorcake*. I have an odd premonition that Joey Ramone will be shortly asking me about it during the fadeout of “Pinhead.”

Shaking it in excess of one time,
–Rev. Nørb



**“WELCOME TO
WISCONSIN,
YOU DUMB SON
OF A BITCH!”**

Precious Moments... Only in a Truly Scary Sort of Way.

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

I realize this may be highly out-of-character for me to base this issue's chicken scratchings around such a seemingly dainty subject. As much as a hard-ass offensive punk rock street thug you may think you are, every now and then you will find yourself in what can only be described as a “precious moment.” Now, this precious moment may not exactly be all teddy bears and bunny muffins. It may very well include burnt vomit and herpes-ridden blood farts. However, it makes you truly smile inside and momentarily feel like life is pretty darn neat. This last Memorial Day weekend I was lucky enough to experience two genuinely precious moments.

(Oh, great. Here we go. The Rhythm Chicken's gettin' all *Prairie Home Companion* on us. – F.F.)

[Precious moments? The Rhythm Chicken? God only knows where THIS could lead. – Dr. S.]

Sooooo, Memorial Day weekend is the first big weekend of the tourist season up here in Door County, Wisconsin. The calm and quiet ghost town days of winter are behind us. It's back to full-blown Chicago yuppie tourist invasion. It's also back to working unending hours and raking in cash hand over fist: the unofficial start of summer. This particular weekend started with me doing the closing shift at the coffee shop. Afterwards, I enjoyed a few cans of Hamm's with my coworkers upstairs and then biked north to the Sister Bay Bowl to see what kind of nightlife this weekend would bring. I ended up gulping down two pitchers of their cheapest beer and then biking a very wobbly path home.

(Well, that does sound a bit precious, I suppose. – F.F.)

Saturday found me working the closing shift again. This particular Saturday was also the first ever “roadsit” at my residence which I was unable to attend. {For those of you new to the Dinghole Reports, a “roadsit” is simply

drinking beer while sitting at the roadside and hoisting your beers to cheers the passing traffic. Seriously, it's a way of life!} While I was at work, the roadsit occurred in front of my home, hosted by Nathan Alexander Bell. My only request was that they don't burn anything this time (long story). When I finished my work shift and returned home, I found a yard full of empties, one former cash register smashed into hundreds of bits, and a rather large burn spot on my lawn. Of course. I was just glad they didn't burn down my home. There was more nightlife to tend to, so I would leave the roadsit cleanup till a later date. I grabbed some Hamm's from the icebox, threw my drums into the car, and zoomed over to the Sister Bay Bowl. The Saturday night of Memorial Day weekend is a big one up here, so they had a band playing. The Mullet Hunters (northern Door County's hard rocker bar band) were dishing out the rock show to the packed Bowl.

(The packed bowl? – F.F.)

[No, no. The packed Bowl. – Dr. S.]

(Is this going anywhere? So far the only “precious moment” was swerving a bike home after a couple pitchers of beer. – F.F.)

[You'd like to think there's a Dinghole Report in here, somewhere, as well. – Dr. S.]

SHOOSH! Silence, you two! So the joint was packed. The band was rockin' out. The tourists and locals were milling about, soaking up drinks, quite unaware of the storm on the horizon.

Dinghole Report #83: Chicken UNMASKED, SHAMED, then Redeemed by Ruckus!

(Rhythm chicken sighting #... no... can it be? #400!!!)

The Mullet Hunters took a break so they could refuel their own ruckus juice. It was time to jump into action. I grabbed one Nick Mitterman and swore him into the Rhythm Chicken Roadie Army. With chickenkit in hand, we pushed our way through the over-capacity crowd. I could hear it already. Voices around us were nonchalantly saying, “Oh, looks like that Rhythm Chicken is gonna play again.” Here in my own neck of

the woods, the ruckus has almost become, dare I say, expected. I would show them! I would rock out harder than any chicken has ever rocked any coop... EVER! After a quick set up in front of the stage, I pulled on the aged and graying chickenhead. My opening drumroll heralded the usual response. People gathered closely around and awaited the expected ruckus. This is my home turf and most of these folks have been graced by almighty ruckus a many number of times. I had to push it to eleven and play harder than chickenly possible! The crowd began to roar as I pounded out a most deafening onslaught of sheerly brutal chicken rock: chickenhead banging, drumsticks blazing, chicken body flailing wildly to the beat. I put everything I had into that first explosion of all-out rhythm rock! I finished up the first round of chaos and, as usual, threw my wings up towards the ceiling and violently threw my head back, ready to accept unheralded adoration and worship. Then it happened, the unthinkable, unimaginable....

My chicken head was thrown off completely.

{{pause for effect}}

[(GASP! – F.F. & Dr. S.)]

For a split second the world simply stopped dead. There I was, completely UNMASKED, my ugly human image exposed for all to see! EXTREME SHAME! ABSOLUTE HUMILIATION! Unwittingly unveiled by my own actions! There I was, staring naked eyes into the naked eyes of those in the front row, my innermost self most shamefully exhibited. After two amazingly long seconds of complete and silent astonishment, the human crowd around me let out an enormous gasp of realization. THEY HAD WITNESSED THAT WHICH COULD NEVER BE SEEN! I snapped out of my stone frozen state and began frantically grabbing behind me for my severed chickenhead. By the time my wings found the battered and beaten relic, the crowd had already started roaring in faux-victorious cheers. THEY HAD SEEN THE RHYTHM CHICKEN UNMASKED! The horror! The HORROR!!!

(Okay, so can one assume that THIS is your precious moment? – F.F.)

Sure, at the time it was an unthinkable nightmare. Now, I find the whole moment to be the funniest thing since the whoopee cushion! Seriously, most everyone there KNOWS who the Rhythm Chicken's human alter-ego is, yet they feigned shock and complete astonishment. They KNEW they had seen that which can never possibly be seen, and they played up their part to the fullest. The Rhythm Chicken prophecy had been fulfilled and played out to a degree never before imagined! For a few seconds, everyone in the Sister Bay Bowl lapsed into a forbidden and haunting parallel universe!

Then I violently pulled the chickenhead back on, concealing my ugly human inner-self. Wasting no time, I threw my drumsticks aside and reached for the panic button. With the almighty ruckus logs firmly grasped in my wings, I thrust them up towards the still disbelieving crowd. The logs came crashing down onto my chickenkit in maximum unrelenting abandon! The ungodly thunder shook the entire county! My roaring rumble rhythms struck terror into those whose eyes were, just moments beforehand, laid upon my innermost image. The crowd backed away as the violent hurricane of riot rock escalated to the inevitable conclusion. The chickenkit exploded into a blur of flailing drums, cymbals, and chicken body parts thrashing about. The chicken show was over, and now I can only sit and wonder what kind of world lays ahead for a forbidden exposed entity like myself.

[Precious, only in a truly scary sort of way. – Dr. S.]

So, the next morning I was up before the crack of dawn, getting the coffee shop open for the throng of caffieds soon to pour in. It was a totally busy eight hours of slinging java drinks, after which I drove fifteen miles north to work another grueling seven hours cooking behind the line at job #2. That Sunday night I fell into another local tavern to drink until I couldn't feel my feet throbbing in pain. It was a full day.

(So, I thought you said there were TWO precious moments. – F.F.)

Patience, Funyuns. Monday morning was Memorial Day and I somehow awoke at sunrise. I lay in bed for an hour, half drunk and half hungover, wishing I could either fall asleep or just die. Finally, I gave up and decided to get shit done. I still had to clean up after that roadsit that I wasn't even able to attend. I crawled out of bed and threw on a pair of dirty shorts, flip-flops, and my favorite thrift store cowboy hat. I felt this to be proper attire for cleaning up my yard with an intense hangover. I crushed and collected all the empties scattered all over my lawn. I gathered all the pieces I could of the smashed cash register and deposited them back at my firepit. I stared at the large black burn spot in my yard and wondered what to do with it, then decided to start up the mower. I had



Photo by Ruckus Thomas

THE RHYTHM CHICKEN UNMASKED! The horror! The HORROR!!!

not yet mowed my lawn this spring and felt it was needed.

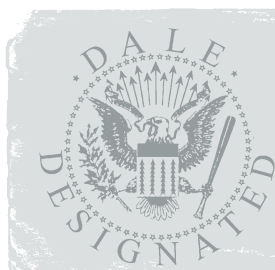
After a few passes around the perimeter, I inched closer to the black burn spot. In my throbbing hungover mind, it seemed like a good idea to simply mow the spot and spread the ashes around the yard. I pushed the mower directly onto the spot and jumped back. Instantly, a HUGE black cloud of ash was thrown into the air! I stood back and watched as the black ash cloud grew steadily from my mower. The wind picked up and started to carry the massive black cloud across the road. I approached my mower and tried to pull it away from the burn spot. Just then, my Memorial Day weekend's second precious moment landed upon me. With my hands back on the mower I looked up to see a large white SUV with Illinois plates slowly creeping through my immense black cloud on the road. The kids in the back were frantically trying to roll their windows up. The father behind the wheel looked back at me and our eyes met. He looked absolutely DISGUSTED. I was laughing inside while trying to pull the mower away.

Just then, the father hit the accelerator and the once-white SUV roared away covered with a fresh film of black ash! I stopped and finally put myself in his shoes. Here, Illinois Daddy is on vacation with the kids, happily driving down some wooded backroad when suddenly his virgin white SUV is ambushed by a large advancing black cloud! Once through the menacing black storm, he looks back to see some shirtless kook in flip-flops and a straw cowboy hat pushing a lawnmower that is endlessly belching waves of black smoke! All this is witnessed in front of my gloriously ramshackle white trash trailer, which is adorned with a large Pabst Blue Ribbon sign. I turned off my mower and watched the stained SUV angrily disappear into the horizon. All I could think was "WELCOME TO WISCONSIN, YOU DUMB SON OF A BITCH!"

[(AMEN! – F.F. & Dr. S.)]

–Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"My father was the type to literally deliver Father Mike from evil with a 12-gauge enema."

Why Do the Right Thing When You Can Keep Throwing Money at It?

Back in issue # 22 of *Razorcake* (with the Marked Men cover), I wrote about a walking piece of shit cleverly disguised as a human being. This man, and I use the word "man" loosely, was once a Catholic priest who was bounced around here in the Southwest like a bad check. Why? Because this guy I speak of, Michael Stephen Baker, perversely enjoys the taste of young male flesh and he just can't seem to stop leaving a deeply scarred trail of innocent lives behind him. In that column, I was lucky enough to get in contact with and catch up with Matt Severson, who was but one of the many targets of Baker's unwarranted filth for over ten years while attending St. Paul of the Cross Church in La Mirada, where I grew up. Being branded at birth a Catholic, I also went to St. Paul's until I bowed out completely in my mid-teens because of the ridiculous don't ask/don't tell policies and all the double standards the Catholic way instills in its people's heads. Enough was enough; no fucking more.

Years down the road, all these sordid priest-meets-boy stories across the nation boiled over and kick started a nationwide investigation into the archdioceses of the Catholic Church. In the front running of all this muck was Baker and his gray-haired, douchebag face slapped amongst newspaper headline stories and glimpses on the five o'clock news. Severson's coming forward with his shattered past had spearheaded Baker getting busted, but Matt's hopes were shut down due to a statute of limitations law that got Baker and a whole lot of other offending priests off the hook.

One of my best friends I've known since kindergarten called me out of the blue one night a few years ago, and we couldn't believe what was going on. A bit of a chill ran down both our spines as we spoke on the phone, knowing just *how close* my older brother and I were to possibly sharing some of the horror business that Matt had to endure for nearly all his kid years. You guessed right—my brother Joe and I were altar boys at the same exact time, too; simple grade school brats. I remember a few peculiar instances with Baker, but I've also come to the conclusion in my adult years that he must've known better. Had he ever laid his priestly sausage upon either of us, my father was the type to literally deliver Father Mike from evil with

a 12-gauge enema, moments before heel-kicking him to death like a dog. Yes, literally. My father (may he rest in peace) wasn't the most rational type, rarely mixed his words, and had an extremely short fuse. So, as dumb as Baker might look to some, you can see as to why I *know* he isn't stupid.

It's 2007, and it's been reported that yet another person has come forward and had Baker arrested in what the prosecution is adding to their list for a class-action lawsuit against the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. With that L.A. list racking up, Baker has helped succeed in pushing our city to the number one spot on the charts of diddling priests involved in almost six hundred cases of abuse. It's been announced recently that a landmark settlement of \$60 million is to be awarded for lawsuits brought by forty-five people who said Catholic priests molested them.

Those cases—a fraction of the number pending against the archdiocese—include those related to Baker. And he didn't do this all by himself, no sir, he had a great enabler on his side: Cardinal Roger Mahony. Mahony was the guy Baker confided his seedy doings to over some twenty years ago, who then shuffled Baker around like a travelling salesman after learning of his ill will towards young boys. After sending Baker to "rehab," Mahony had him bouncing all over the Southland here in California, leaving a trail of shitty, wounded childhoods behind him.

After the dam burst with Severson's testimony, Mahony only *then* decided to finally pull the plug on Baker's priesthood in 2000 when the shit started to seriously hit the fan. Simply put, Mahony is to Baker as Cochran and Shapiro were to O.J. Simpson (and karma sure caught up with Cochran, didn't it? Feed the worms, Cochran!). I'm truly disgusted with the powers that be in the cult of Catholic faith that they will not make an example out of Mahony and nip this shit in the bud. But why do the right thing when you can keep throwing money at it?

In his most current court case, Baker and his lawyer, Donald H. Steier, pointed to a state Supreme Court decision last year that struck down a provision of the law that required gay child offenders to register for life while imposing less stringent registration requirements on heterosexual offenders.

"Had my client been engaged in heterosexual intercourse with a female of the same age (as his male victims), he could not have been charged," Steier said. Baker continued, stating in court that the rights of homosexuals have been violated by a state law that makes it easier to prosecute gay pedophiles than heterosexual child molesters. Baker cited a provision of the U.S. Constitution that has been used to advance racial and gender equality. He also said the provision denies equal protection of the law to gay people. The actual state law in question imposes no time limits on prosecuting heterosexuals who force intercourse, but gays are subject to prosecution for sex acts with a child without limit, regardless of whether the allegations involved forced or consensual sex. Can you believe the angle these creeps are trying to present? I mean, the audacity is fucking *unthinkable*!

A staff attorney for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the premier group lobbying for the legal rights of gays, said the sexual orientation of an abuser is irrelevant. "People don't have the right to abuse children regardless of their sexual orientation," said Tara Borelli, a Lambda staff attorney. "Abuse by a gay priest isn't a gay issue; it's about abuse of power." Borelli's absolutely right—abuse is abuse. Steier suggested that Baker's victims consented to the contacts, a claim that prosecutors strongly denounced. "To characterize sexual contact between a priest and a student as consensual, let alone as 'consensual, mutual, gentle, homosexual contact' or a 'romantic relationship' as the defense does, is not only profoundly inappropriate, but odious and offensive," according to court papers filed by Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley's office. In other words, cut the shit. Shit like this makes my head spin.

People think that Microsoft is evil, and they are to a big extent, but they haven't got *anything* on Push Shit Under The Rug, Inc. located in the heart of the Vatican. What a fucking racket. Until Baker gets sentenced, all I can wish for is a couple of sniper's bullets, JFK style. One can only hope, no? The possibility of him even getting shanked is next to zero, as he occupies a single cell away from the inmates in general population at the downtown Central Men's Jail in L.A.

And speaking of downtown L.A., it's especially ironic that the \$190 million Our

Lady of Angels compound that Mahony presides over is sitting blocks away from Baker's current place of residence. Maybe they can work out a prisoner work program, just as long as there are no underage males in robes around to tempt Baker. Then again, mum's the word with Mahony, right?

Lately, while getting updated on all the latest goings-on with ex-Father Fuckface, I started to think who else in my surrounding neighborhood here in L.A. is an actual registered sex offender in the state of California. I'd remember seeing something on the news not too long ago reporting a controversy on whether or not it's right to put up public notices of sex offenders in the neighborhood.

A currently released offender moved into a predominately family-style neighborhood and one of the families there happens to keep up to date on a California government website called <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/>. (Megan's Law is named after seven-year-old Megan Kanka, a New Jersey girl who was raped and killed by a known child molester who had moved across the street from the family without their knowledge. In the wake of the tragedy, the Kankas sought to have local communities warned about sex offenders in the area. All states now have a form of Megan's Law.) Once it was confirmed that the person was indeed registered on this site, the woman made flyers of the sex offender with the info she found and posted it up around the neighborhood. It really didn't sound like much of a controversy to me while I was watching the news story; she was just making the info that much easier for the entire neighborhood to see. It's not like every neighborhood doesn't have at least one or two neighbors who flap their gums about everything to begin with. This way, with the flyers, the facts are facts, not rumors that get out of control.

Hell, even Yvonne and I wouldn't mind these flyers in our neighborhood, and we don't even have kids. We're both down for protecting kids or anyone else who's susceptible to fall victim to some creep. And for those who say these offenders have privacy rights whether or not they get released back into society, stop and think about the personal rights they yanked away from their victims the second they dished out their criminally sick offenses onto them. These victims aren't ever going to get that 100% peace of mind and body back, so why should some scumbag have the nerve to cry out about his right to privacy? They gave it up the moment they started being a sex offender. So deal with it like all of your unfortunate victims. The Megan's Law site provides you with access to information on more than 63,000 people who are required by law to register as sex offenders in the state of California. Specific home addresses are listed on more than 33,500 offenders in different California communities, and with these people, the site displays the last registered address reported by the offender (which they are required to do on an annual basis). Almost every single profile has a picture of said offender, as well. If you live in the state of California, give the site a look and see just



Illustration by Steve Larder

Abuse by a gay priest isn't a gay issue; it's about abuse of power.

who's living around you. If you reside outside of California, do an internet search for the Megan's Law list in your corresponding state. You'll be surprised of how close some of these people are living in your area. I actually saw a guy close to my age who went to my high school listed on there a coupla days ago, as well as a familiar face from my own neighborhood. Please understand that I'm not trying to scare or get any of you reading this paranoid, I'm just hoping that you'll gain a better perspective in and around your neighborhood, especially those who live in neighborhoods with young children. Knowledge is wealth, folks. Share the wealth.

For any or all that have ever been abused by a Catholic priest, please visit the SNAP

Network website at: <http://www.snapnetwork.org> (A big thanks to SNAP Western Regional Director, Mary Grant).

And also please visit our pals and fine folks at: <http://www.protect.org/>

I'm Against It,
—Designated Dale

P.S. To those of you who had no idea of where to email your answers to the Ramones quiz from my last column—sorry, it wasn't listed. Here you go: designateddale@yahoo.com

CHICO SIMIO

TALES FROM "ARRIBA"

PART 1 · ART.

I REMEMBER EVERY SUMMER, WE WOULD GO "ARRIBA", MEANING NORTH TO FRESNO.



FRESNO

700 MILES
ONE OR TAKE

CALEXICO

MY TATA (GRANDPA) WAS IN CHARGE OF COOKING FOR THE MEN WORKING IN THE FIELDS. THE REST OF US, HELPED KEEP THE BARRACKS CLEAN, WHERE THE MEN SLEPT, ATE, AND LIVED FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.



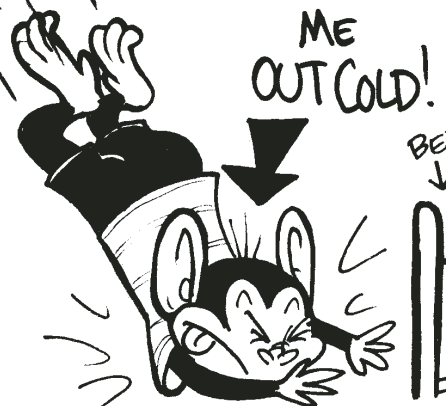
WE HAD OUR OWN ROOMS WITH BEDS AND ONE SET OF BUNK BEDS. ONE NIGHT I THOUGHT I WAS MIGHTY MOUSE AND DECIDED TO "FLY" FROM THE TOP BUNK TO ONE OF THE LOWER BEDS.



20 FEET



DUMB LITTLE MONKEY.

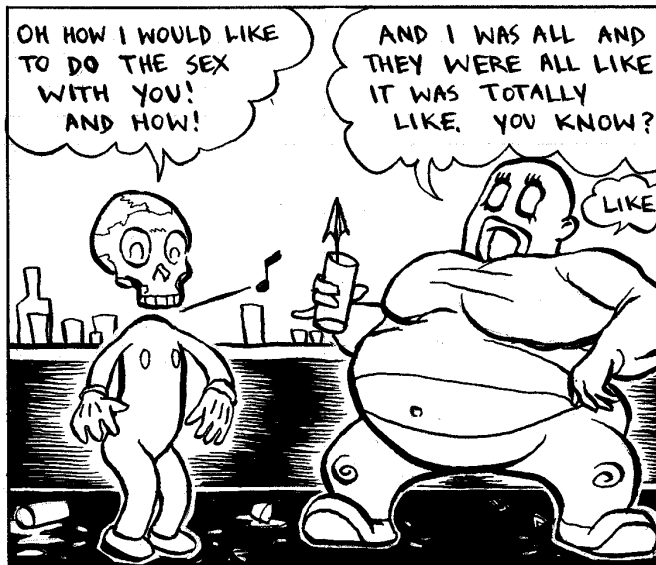


WON'TEN NOT NEW

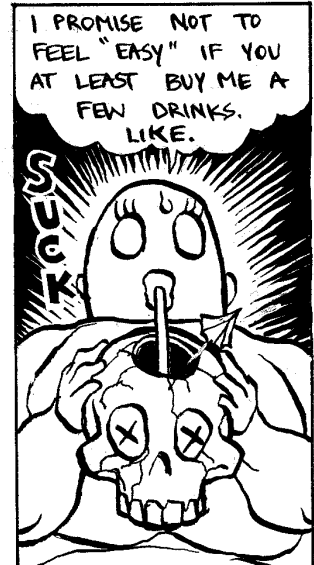
BY KIYOSHI



VAMPIRA NOT ELVIRA



BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SPELL ASSASSIN WITHOUT ASS ASS IN.



LAST CALL!



OOROOTORAHMAN DOES NOT PASS JUDGEMENT ON CONSENTING ADULTS WHO HAVE ONE NIGHT STANDS. HE IS NEITHER ANGRY NOR JEALOUS.



OOROOTORAHMAN JUST IS.

DOO
DOOLA
DOO
DOO...

DOO
DOO!

WHO ARE YOU?

"Nardwuar: Didn't the Ramones open for Rush at one time?"
Geddy Lee: No."

Nardwuar vs. Geddy Lee

the Human Serviette (of Rush)

Here is an interview I did a while back with Canada's greatest export, RUSH!

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Geddy Lee: [Pause] I beg your pardon?

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Geddy Lee: Who are you?

Nardwuar: I am Nardwuar the Human Serviette, and you are?

Geddy Lee: You are the Human Serviette?

Nardwuar: Nardwuar the Human Serviette.

Geddy Lee: Well, that's rather gross. What does that mean?

Nardwuar: Just like, you know, napkin—you know, wiping things up with it. But you are.... Most importantly, you are....

Geddy Lee: I am a guy.

Nardwuar: You are Geddy Lee!

Geddy Lee: Yes.

Nardwuar: Geddy, you are God! I must say that! You are God! You are Geddy Lee! You are God!

Geddy Lee: Well, that's an unusual way to describe me.

Nardwuar: So Geddy, at one time did Rush open for the New York Dolls at the old New Yorker Theatre in Toronto?

Geddy Lee: Uh, we opened for the New York Dolls at the Victory Burlesque Theatre in Toronto.

Nardwuar: How "glam" were you back then?

Geddy Lee: How "glam"?

Nardwuar: Yeah, how "glam" were you back...

Geddy Lee: I think we were going through a transition of being slightly "glam" in a bar band sense—because at that stage we were pretty much a bar band—and, uh, the transition from that to kind of a more rock band.

Nardwuar: Because you were very effeminate at that time. I had this wall towel of you guys where you were all wearing silk kimonos!

Geddy Lee: Yeah, we used to. We used to wear silks and satins and ridiculous platform shoes and sequined tops and things like that.

Nardwuar: Was there any particular shampoo that you used at all, Geddy?

Geddy Lee: Well, that's a rather dumb question.

Nardwuar: Well, I was just curious—to bring out that special Rush look in the early days.

Geddy Lee: Yeah. Well, I can tell this

interview is going into a very boring direction for me.

Nardwuar: Well, Geddy, first off, you started your own label, Anthem, because no one else who would get behind Rush. You guys were the prototype for the original Canadian DIY punk band!

Geddy Lee: We were—I beg your pardon?

Nardwuar: Like, you guys started Anthem, your label, because no one else would get behind you guys. You are like the original Canadian DIY band! Do It Yourself band!

Geddy Lee: Yes. Well, I guess so.

Nardwuar: Now, I also heard, Geddy, that you like baseball.

Geddy Lee: Yes?

Nardwuar: Mike Piazza likes Slayer. Do you hang around any baseball players?

Geddy Lee: Well, I have some friends who are baseball players.

Nardwuar: Did you ever hang around Dave Winfield at all?

Geddy Lee: Uh, no. I met him one time.

Nardwuar: What did you think when he killed that pigeon a few years ago, you being a Blue Jays fan, I'd imagine?

Geddy Lee: [Laughs] Well, I think it was kind of an unusual circumstance, to say the least. [Laughs]

Nardwuar: So, Geddy, did you hang around tennis player, Vitas Gerulaitis, a little while back?

Geddy Lee: Yeah, he was a friend of mine for a while.

Nardwuar: And Vitas Gerulaitis hung around John MacEnroe, who hung around the Dead Boys! Did you ever see the Dead Boys in the early days of Rush?

Geddy Lee: No.

Nardwuar: Didn't the Ramones open for Rush at one time?

Geddy Lee: No.

Nardwuar: "Rush, little known pretenders to punk rock's raunchy throne, stormed on stage at the Summit Arena in Houston, and received the earsplitting roar usually reserved for such legendary hard rock bands as Led Zeppelin and Grand Funk Railroad." This was from *Maclean's Magazine*, 1977. "Rush, little known pretenders to punk rock's raunchy throne!"

Geddy Lee: That's pretty odd.

Nardwuar: That was *Maclean's Magazine*...

Geddy Lee: Yeah, I know. Well, I guess to *Maclean's Magazine* we must have seemed like punk, which doesn't say much for what *Maclean's Magazine* knows about music.

Nardwuar: Geddy, how come you guys never did do a full-on punk album? A lot of my friends were wondering that, because that would have been wicked! A Rush punk album!

Geddy Lee: It's because we weren't a punk band.

Nardwuar: But you had some punk-associated type things with you. For example, didn't Gerald Casale from Devo do some of your videos?

Geddy Lee: Yeah, but he wasn't punk.

Nardwuar: And you wore a Devo pin as well!

Geddy Lee: Yeah, but they weren't punk.

Nardwuar: But you had that kind of feel, though. Like, you wore skinny ties. And you seemed to be kind of inspired by new wave. Like, were you into Gary Numan?

Geddy Lee: No.

Nardwuar: What about "Digital Man" and "Spirit of the Radio" having reggae parts? Would you say there was any punk feel there at all? Why didn't you...

Geddy Lee: I don't know why you associate reggae style with punk.

Nardwuar: It was the whole new wave...

Geddy Lee: It's a completely different genre of music.

Nardwuar: Well, a lot of the punk bands use that. Like, the Clash did reggae. Even D.O.A. from Vancouver broke into some reggae as well. I just kind of saw some of that Police influence in those songs.

Geddy Lee: Yeah, well, the Police were a pop band, not a punk band.

Nardwuar: So do you take offense to the word "punk" then, Geddy?

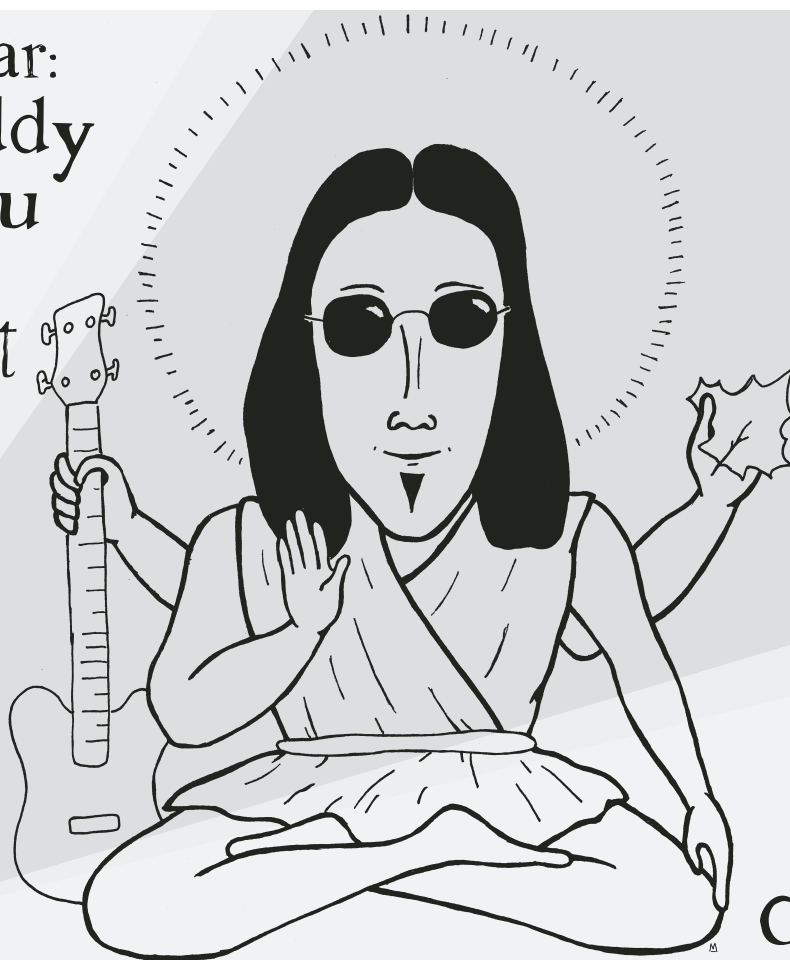
Geddy Lee: No, I don't take offense to the word at all. There were some punk bands that I liked, but I don't see how you can associate them with our music.

Nardwuar: Well, I just see that you guys had that punk feel, because you had the Melvins open for you guys. Do you think the Melvins were the best band ever to open for Rush, Geddy?

Geddy Lee: Uh, no. I think—Melvins were a pretty interesting band. Unfortunately, they really didn't fare very well in front of our audience.

Nardwuar: What happened?

Nardwuar:
And, Geddy
Lee, if you
were a
dog, what
breed
would
you
be?



Geddy:
NeXt
question.

Illustration by Maynard

Geddy Lee: Well, they weren't very well thought of. [Laughs]

Nardwuar: Geddy, do you feel guilty at all about the thousands of teenage boys who ended up with blisters on their thumbs trying to be a cool rock bassist like yourself?

Geddy Lee: [Laughs] No. Yeah. I feel real guilty about it.

Nardwuar: Have you ever talked to Lemmy from Motörhead about basses? He has, like, a customized Rickenbacher bass and yours is stock.

Geddy Lee: Well, it's been many years since I've talked to Lemmy and I remember at the time, we didn't talk much about basses.

Nardwuar: What did you talk about, Geddy Lee?

Geddy Lee: Oh, other stuff.

Nardwuar: Geddy, speaking of talking, Ben Mink has said that you speak fluent Yiddish.

Geddy Lee: Uh huh.

Nardwuar: How many other rock stars can do that? How many other rock stars can speak fluent Yiddish like Geddy Lee of Rush?

Geddy Lee: [Laughs] Well, aside from Ben Mink, I don't know too many.

Nardwuar: Your voice really is truly amazing. However, Geddy, *Rolling Stone Record Guide* seems to think that you have "a voice like Donald Duck." What the hell is their problem?

Geddy Lee: I don't know. You will have to ask them.

Nardwuar: And speaking of your voice, have you heard the Pavement song, "Stereo," off the *Brighten the Corners* album that has the lyrics, "What about the voice of Geddy Lee? How did it get so high? I wonder if he speaks like an ordinary guy. I know him, and he does!"

Geddy Lee: Right. I've heard about it. I haven't heard it myself.

Nardwuar: What do you do when you hear a song like that? Do you feel proud that you've installed these young punkers—again, going back to the punk allusion, Geddy—with the feel of Rush? What do feel about that when you hear a song like that?

Geddy Lee: I think it's amusing. I think in a weird way it is complimentary.

Nardwuar: And, Geddy Lee of Rush, have you seen the book *Mondo Canuck* by Geoff Pevere and Greig Dymond?

Geddy Lee: Uh, no, I haven't.

Nardwuar: Because in it there, they quote from *Creem Magazine* in 1976 by a Rick Johnson who writes, "The first thing you notice about Rush is that they're not as gross looking as Bachman Turner Overdrive and that they have a somewhat lower thud weight than most other Canadian bands. True enough, Canuck rockers do seem to have some sort of uglier-than-thou competition among themselves along with a tendency to pounce on unsuspecting ears like a carnivorous dump truck." What is the deal on

Creem Magazine? Why do Americans think Canuck rockers are so ugly?

Geddy Lee: Uh, I have no idea. I guess when you're, uh, you have to take that time period into consideration and when you think of the bands that were successful from Canada around that period, you're talking about the Guess Who and Bachman Turner Overdrive and that's pretty much it. So it doesn't paint a very pretty picture, does it?

Nardwuar: No, but I was curious... How about female fans? Did you have many female fans, Geddy Lee?

Geddy Lee: Now?

Nardwuar: Back then.

Geddy Lee: Back then, very few.

Nardwuar: Yeah, because critics were saying that you were ugly and maybe that's what they were equating it with, but that's not true, because what's wild about you guys is—I would say your brand of rock, Rush's rock—is kind of like "geek rock" in a way and it is also "thug rock." Because you have the "geek rock"—a lot of the kids who were into *Dungeons & Dragons* were into you guys, but also the thugs in the school—the big tough guys—were also into it. Would you agree with that, Geddy Lee?

Geddy Lee: Well, I think our audience was mostly musicians, and if you want to call them geeks or not is up to you, but there were a lot of musicians in the crowd and, uh, we also seemed to appeal to people who were a little over inebriated.

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Nardwuar: Geddy, the Canadian content on the Rush resume is amazing! You are the man! Like I said, you are God! You are Geddy Lee! You sang "Take Off Eh (to) the Great White North!" That's great to have that on your resume!

Geddy Lee: Well, it's amusing.

Nardwuar: It's excellent! And... you also had Count Floyd—Count Floyd from SCTV!—introduce the tune "The Red Barchetta" at one of your concerts! Like didn't that happen?

Geddy Lee: Yeah, the song was "The Weapon." I believe.

Nardwuar: On a big video screen!



Nardwuar: Is there any truth to the rumor of Rush roadies accepting Ayn Rand books as bribes to get backstage to meet you guys?

Geddy Lee: Yeah. He did a couple of intros for us.

Nardwuar: Geddy Lee of Rush, what was it like being present for the recordings of the greatest Canadian record of all time?

Geddy Lee: What was that?

Nardwuar: *Tears Are Not Enough!* Artists for Africa!

Geddy Lee: [Laughs] Well! It was interesting. It was fairly comical to watch all these people being one by one brought to the mic and ordered around by David Foster. Uh, at the same time, it was a lot of fun to meet people like Neil Young and Joni Mitchell who are artists that I have had a lot of respect for many years, but I would say it was a very odd pairing of human beings.

Nardwuar: Well, just how annoying was David "blowdry" Foster in the studio on that fateful day in March, 1985, Geddy Lee?

Geddy Lee: Well, I remember him asking Joni Mitchell to sing her line over and over again, and, to everyone standing around, every performance was wonderful, and yet he insisted on making her sing it over and over again—to most people's amazement. And then when Neil Young came in, he sang it once, and, uh, David Foster asked him to sing it again because it was a little out of tune, and Neil replied to him that that's his style and he's not going to do it again, to which a great swelling of pride welled up in all the onlookers!

Nardwuar: Your line "And you know that we'll be there"—that's awesome! Did you have any trouble getting that off at all?

Geddy Lee: No. It was one take.

Nardwuar: But I was shattered to learn though from Terry Brown your producer—shattered to learn when he revealed that "Tom Sawyer" is comprised of three drum takes!? Three different drum takes for "Tom Sawyer!" Say it isn't so, Geddy!

Geddy Lee: Uh, I don't remember that, to be honest. But in those days, you were recording everything analog and you are also playing as a band, so when you record it, it wasn't just drums playing by

themselves. It was bass, drums, guitar playing the bed tracks together. So the only technology available was to cut between different takes, which was quite normal in those days.

Nardwuar: So does that mean there's edits in "Tom Sawyer," Geddy Lee?

Geddy Lee: There very well could be.

Nardwuar: Is there any truth to the rumor of Rush roadies accepting Ayn Rand books as bribes to get backstage to meet you guys?

Geddy Lee: [Laughs] I don't think so!

Nardwuar: And, Geddy, do you really believe all that Ayn Rand shit? I mean, come on, do

rock? You know, ELP, Yes, Amon Duel, Can, Gentle Giant? What to you is real prog rock?

Geddy Lee: Well, prog rock, I'm afraid, is a dying or an outdated form of music. Nobody's really carrying the tradition on, but in its day, Van Der Graft Generator and, at times, Genesis and, you know, Yes—those bands were interesting to me.

Nardwuar: Was there ever a Triumph-versus-Rush rivalry at all? Because Triumph were kind of like a bad Rush. Was there ever a Triumph-versus-Rush rivalry?

Geddy Lee: [Laughs] Not in my mind.

Nardwuar: Because they put on a good light

show, but they're weren't no Max Webster, were they? I mean, Max Webster! That was the hit! They were it!

Geddy Lee: That was a great band.

Nardwuar: Were Max Webster kind of like a baby Rush?

Geddy Lee: No, they were completely their own personality, very different from us.

Nardwuar: Geddy Lee of Rush, what was the biggest thing you ever had chucked at you on stage in Rush?

Geddy Lee: A shoe.

Nardwuar: That was the biggest thing?

Geddy Lee: Yup.

Nardwuar: Like, nobody's ever grabbed a microwave or anything else bizarre and suddenly ended up at your feet...

Geddy Lee: No, no, no. No fridges. No missiles. Just a shoe. And believe me, when a shoe hits you in the head, it feels pretty dam big.

Nardwuar: And, Geddy Lee, if you were a dog, what breed would you be?

Geddy Lee: Next question.

Nardwuar: Anything else you would like to add at all to the people out there, Geddy Lee?

Geddy Lee: Mmm. No, thank you.

Nardwuar: Why should people care about Rush?

Geddy Lee: I haven't got the foggiest idea.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks for your time, Geddy. Keep on rockin' in the free world. And, doot doola doot doo...

Geddy Lee: Okay.

Nardwuar: Geddy Lee, doot doola doot doo...

Geddy Lee: Good bye!

Nardwuar: No, Geddy Lee, doot doola doot doo...

Geddy Lee: See ya!

Nardwuar: No, Geddy Lee. Please? Doot doola doot doo...

Geddy Lee: See ya.

Nardwuar: Please, Geddy....Doot doola doot doo...

Geddy Lee: [Dialtone. Geddy hangs up]

To hear this interview visit <http://www.nardwuar.com>.

Geddy Lee: Yeah, well, I don't smoke dope.

Nardwuar: Geddy, what to you is real prog



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"There I was, two or three different kinds of fucked up."

THE BIRTH OF DRINKS FOR THE LITTLE GUY

The banging on my door started around four a.m. I was out cold, sleeping the sleep of a derelict. I'm not sure exactly how fucked up I'd been when I went to bed. Definitely drunk. I'd probably gotten high. Surely I had. It was a Saturday night, after all. I worked the Saturday night shift in downtown Atlanta. Sometime after the rush and before cashing out and finishing my side work, I'd snuck out to the dumpster with one of the line cooks and smoked a joint. If not then, we probably would've burned one on the way to the next bar. Depending on whether or not any of my friends or coworkers had been to the dentist lately, or just managed to finagle a prescription, I'd probably taken a painkiller or two somewhere along the line. Not that I had any real pain to kill. But there I was at four a.m., two or three different kinds of fucked up, with someone pounding on my door.

I did not immediately wake up. I did, however, apparently, yell something in my sleep, because when the guy who'd been banging on the door finally kicked the door in, he was screaming about me screaming something. I wasn't sure what was going on. I didn't fully wake up until the door had been kicked in. That did wake me. At the time, I lived in a studio apartment. The foot of my bed was a foot away from the front door. When the door gave, I woke up and jumped up and put my fists up. And there we stood, face to face: me in my boxers and him fully clothed. Both of us wild-eyed, both a little surprised. Though I don't know why he should've been so surprised. He'd obviously kicked in my door on purpose.

"Where's Ron?" the guy yelled.

"You got the wrong place," I yelled. We were five feet away from one another.

"Fuck you. I heard him in here. Where the fuck is he?"

"There's no Ron here."

"Ron?" he called out, as if I had a Ron in the closet or something. Light from the hallway cut into my pad. If the guy cared to look around, he could've seen everything: a boom box; a handful of CDs in the cardboard box that a Rolling Rock case had come in; a plain white desk intended for illustrating but used for writing; a Smith Corona word processor; a pile of serrated paper used for printing multiple pages in the old dot matrix

printers; a pile of disks for the Smith Corona word processor; an office chair; a loveseat rescued from a curb in a part of town where furniture should not be rescued from curbs; a bunch of trash bags in the tiny kitchen; a significant shoe box by my bed; and not much else but me in my boxers. My dirty clothes were probably on the floor. I probably had a little bong somewhere around there, too.

Ron, of course did not answer. There was no Ron.

"I'm not fucking around," the guy said. He paused for me to say something, but I'd said what I had to say. I kept my fists up and ran through my options. As long as he stood where he was, I'd stand where I was. If he backed out of the apartment, I'd let him. If he takes one more step, I thought, I'm gonna jump him. Go for his eyes. Try to jam your thumbs into his eyes.

The way I saw it, this was no time to fight. This guy, though smaller than me, could've been anything and anyone. He could've been armed. He could've been a black belt in karate. He could've been the baddest motherfucker in town. He could've been a weak little man who kicked in the wrong door. I had no way of knowing. All I knew about him was that he'd had the guts to kick in someone's door at four a.m. and now he seemed to be reconsidering that move.

He kept yelling out questions, but I didn't answer. I kept telling myself, *Go for his eyes.*

When I think about it now, I get nervous all over again. Or, I shouldn't say all over again because I wasn't nervous when I stood there in my boxers, fists up, two or three types of ill-advised drugs pumping through my veins. At that point, I was more determined than nervous. Now, I get nervous thinking about it. It doesn't seem that long ago. It was a long time ago. This guy kicked in my door almost exactly thirteen years ago. Thirteen years is a good bit of time. It's the entire lifespan of a current eighth grader. But, in my mind, it seems like it just happened a year or two ago. And what makes me nervous is knowing why I was determined to gouge this dude's eyes out.

About twelve hours earlier, I'd finished writing the first draft of my first novel. Nearly every morning for the past five months, regardless of how hungover or tired

or busy I was, I typed away on this novel. I kept writing through a painful breakup and a bout of food poisoning. The only mornings I didn't write were the ones when I worked the day shift, but I always came home from the day shift reasonably sober and set to typing. That little studio was ancient and had ancient wiring. I could run two electrical items at a time, provided that one of those items was the boom box. I had to choose, though, between the air conditioner and the word processor. If I tried to run both at the same time, I'd blow a fuse. Those old fuses were expensive. There was no sense in blowing them, anyway. It wasn't like you could get in an hour of air-conditioning and typing before the fuse blew. It blew right away. I spent that whole summer with my windows open to the alley, hardly any outside air blowing in and the outside air hot as hell, anyway, writing my long, long story about carpenters in Florida, most of whom were based on me and/or my friends, most of what they did based on what me and/or my friends did or should've done or would've liked to have done. And now it was written, but in a very fragile way. The novel only existed on eleven Smith Corona word processor disks. Each disc had enough memory to store about twelve pages, single-spaced. I hadn't yet printed it out because it took forever on those old word processors. About seven minutes per page, and you had to feed each page individually. I'd have to sweat through twenty or so hours of printing, which was a lot less fun than sweating through hundreds of hours of writing it. Still, all I could think when that guy kicked in my door was, *he wants the novel. Gouge his eyes out before he gets it.*

That's what makes me nervous. In retrospect, I had a lot more to lose that night. I had a lot of cash in that apartment because I was a waiter and made all my money in cash and this was the end of the month, which meant I had money for rent and all my bills piled up in a shoe box right by my bed. The cover to the shoe box was open and the piles of cash were in plain sight. Beyond that, I had my life and my well-being to think about. None of that mattered to me. I only thought about protecting that crazy novel and gouging that guy's eyes out.

He must've recognized this, somehow. I must've been a sight: two or three

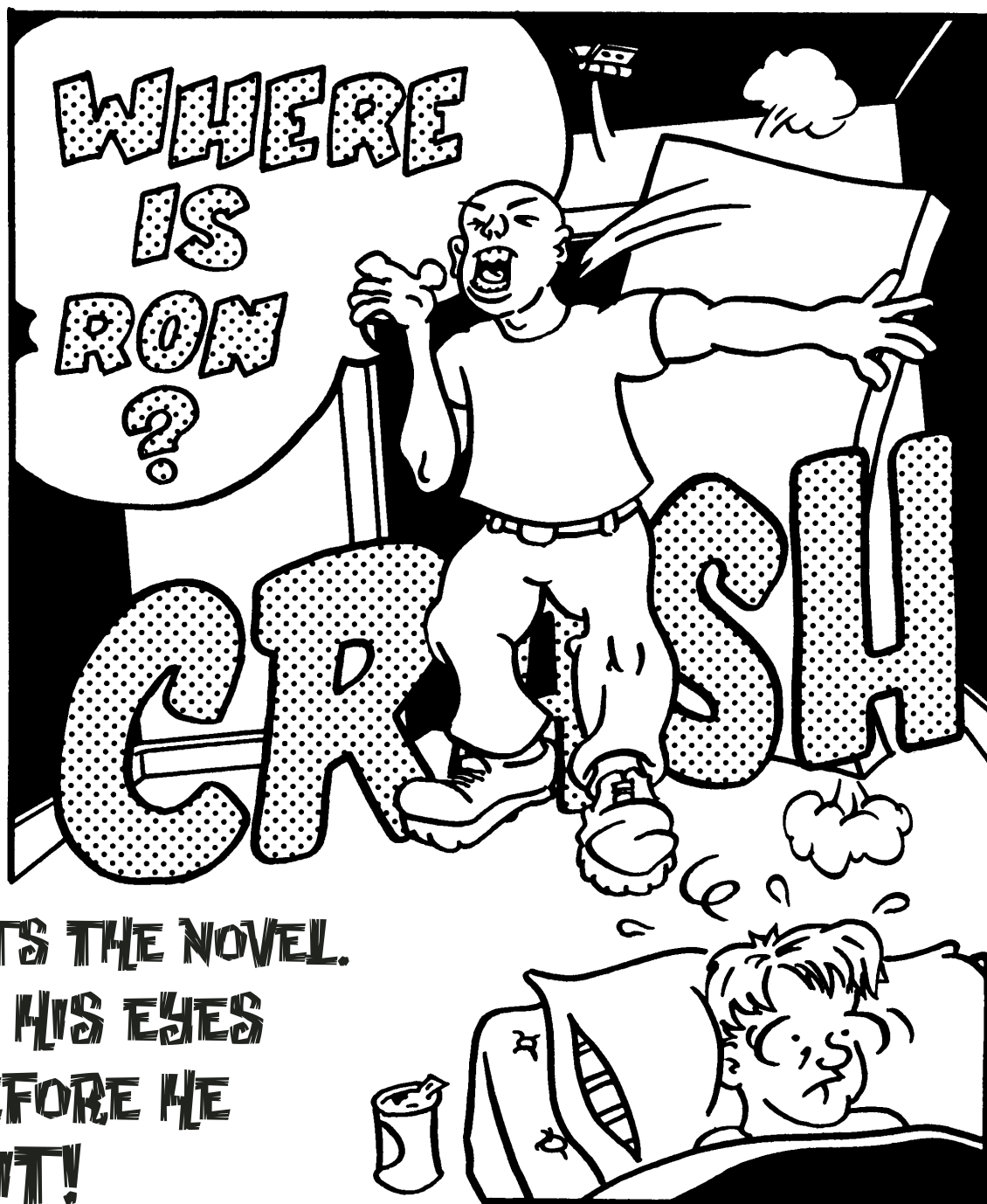


Illustration by Brad Beshaw

**HE WANTS THE NOVEL.
GOUGE HIS EYES
OUT BEFORE HE
GETS IT!**

different kinds of fucked up, wild hair going everywhere, eyes so bloodshot they were nearly bleeding, fists up, and not saying another word. Just ready to fight.

And, clearly, there was no Ron. The guy said, "I think I have the wrong apartment."

I gave a very slight nod.

"I'm sorry, man. I'm really sorry," he said. He took a step back, out of my doorway. I started moving after him. He turned, ran down the hall and down the stairs and out the front door. I chased him as far as the top of the stairs.

I couldn't exactly lock my door after that. I dragged my mattress in front of it so that, if anyone tried to get inside, they'd

have to push both me and my bed out of the way. I passed out again within a minute or two. There must've been a painkiller or two somewhere in my blood.

The landlord sent a handyman out the next day to fix my door. The handyman showed up a few hours before I had to leave for work that night. By that point, I'd rigged up the ream of serrated computer paper so that it would continually feed into the word processor. It worked pretty well. My manuscript was printing it out all in one piece. All I had to do was change disks every eighty-four minutes and set the next twelve pages to printing. While the handyman jury-

rigged my door frame, I walked down the hall and knocked on my neighbor's door. My neighbor's name, of course, was Ron. I told him what happened. He said to me, "It's not me. That guy must be looking for a different Ron."

"Whatever," I said. Of course, I knew he was full of shit, but what did I care? He'd been warned. I doubted anyone would be kicking in my door again.

And, most important to me, anyway; that crazy novel remained unharmed.

—Sean Carswell

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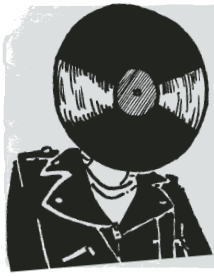
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GUEST COLUMNIST

CRAVEN ROCK

"We all have rock within us. It's not how much we have; it's how much we let out."

ESSENCE OF ROCK

Rock has existed as long as humans have been fucking up this planet: going under different names, carried on by different bards, storytellers, freaks, shamans, and troubadours. But there has always been rock. It exists in all of us, in varying degrees, the varying degrees being a crucial point. Some rock hard. Some resist the rock and push it down deep within them until it barely exists. Some just don't rock very much. Some people rock so much that they rock in ways we cannot understand. But deep inside all of us lays the need to rock.

While the word, rock, might define a music form or a style, it is more than that. It is the very resistant nature of humanity. It is the core element of freedom and expression. You can argue that I'm going out on a limb. That rock might be passionate, but passion is not rock'n'roll. Or that what I'm referring to is the human soul, not some pop culture art form like rock. To that, I simply say, "tomato, tomato" and shrug. Some call it soul. George Clinton called it funk. It's all the best parts of what makes us human. Everybody rocks in their own way. If you rock, you rock. It's just that simple.

Once on an episode of *Beavis and Butthead*, while sitting at home watching videos, Butthead makes the comment, "I don't like stuff that sucks." That may sound like a double negative or a non-sequiter. But Butthead, while having shit-for-brains, had an almost savantist idea of what rock is all about and the comment hints at a larger truth. When Butthead is saying he doesn't like stuff that sucks, he is simply stating that he doesn't like stuff that doesn't rock. This echoes America's oldest champion of the human spirit Walt Whitman when he said, "dismiss whatever insults your soul." Rock is a continuation of a theme, that theme being the pursuit of life.

This is where a lot of us get it wrong (especially punks, hardcore kids, anyone who feels they fall outside of the mainstream). We want to clearly define what rocks and what doesn't. We want to make divisions between those who rock and

those who don't. We want to make it an "us versus them" dichotomy. However, it is not an issue of "us versus them," but one of "us more than them." How much one rocks has everything to do with how much of their soul they let out. Every soul strives to get free. Some choose to let it out. Some choose to reign it in. Some choose passionate lives full of joy, pain, and resistance. Some prefer to get with the program and go for rigidity, boredom, and authority.

At times, rock flirts with domination and control (Agnostic Front, oi, hardline, straight-edge), but it can't remain there, because rock is in and of it self an attempt of freeing itself from these bonds. When rock becomes domineering, it is dealing with the same societal constructs that it is trying to shake. This is why Christian rock is an oxymoron. Rock is the part of the human spirit that rejects gods, orders, and authority. With much chagrin, I will admit that Christians can rock, but in doing so they blaspheme Christianity. Since Christianity is confining, it's just another thing that rock shrugs off. Thus the only way a Christian can really rock is when they're listening to or making secular music. Christian rock can never exist as anything but an oxymoron.

Let he who threw the stone at them stand up and take a bow, they have the verve to love but will never, ever know how.

-Nina Simone

When rock rejects order and power, it often does so almost unintentionally. Speaking by example, it says, "Fuck that shit, we're doing this because it feels good." (Sure, there are political and social lyrics in rock music, but they ultimately reiterate the point of what the music behind it is stating really simply.) That is to say that rock is desire and discontentment. Rock exists solely on what the true soul unclouded by religion or society demands; it needs no doctrine or strong argument to back it up. It stays in the place where those ideas first began: emotion at its most basic level. For instance, if some crust band is growling about how they are

against the current war, we don't need a lyric sheet to know that the singer is fucking pissed. They sound fucking pissed. That's why they chose rock'n'roll as their outlet in the first place. There's a time and place to analyze rock lyrics, but to do so here would be putting the cart before the horse.

Let me give you an example. When I was a lot younger, I was walking away from a hardcore show at a punk house in a black neighborhood in Oakland. A gray-haired, middle-aged man jogged up and pointed at the War (band) T-shirt that I was wearing and hollers at me, "Yo, you jam War?" "Fuck yeah," I yelled back. He then gave me dog (we bumped fists together as a greeting) and cackled before heading back to his porch. In that brief moment, the two of us had a moment where, through a mutual love of music and/or rock, we realized that we both had ways in which we rocked or *jammed*, if you will. Are things more complex than that? Of course, but I reiterate, rock is the most basic of human desire and need, which is quite simple. I have no idea what this guy might think of a lot of dirty, white kids amassing in his neighborhood, to listen to the loud, melody-less music that vibrates his home and brings the cops around. One could also analyze the underlying issues of gentrification, privilege, race, and all the basic power issues that go along with living in America today. But these complexities remain outside of that moment that the two of us had. At the core of all people is a need to be together, to have collectivity and sharing. Hell, that's why religion has gotten over on humanity for thousands of years, because it promised us those things but instead gave us repression and hate. In that short amount of time, both of us spoke of that basic need.

Why can't we be friends?
-War

Allow me to refer to a different time (or several times, as this has happened more than once) when I was at a bar and one of my favorite songs came on the jukebox. I was really getting into it, when I looked over

to my right and noticed some jock or yuppie-looking guy was getting into the same song. In this moment I could no longer define myself by our differences and it pissed me off. I feel like I am someone who has listened more to the voice within, pursuing my heart's desires, my passion. The yuppie who was rocking out to the same song—I assumed—had taken the other route, that of stability and sterility. I assume he had silenced the voice that spoke of desire and dreams and had chosen stability and social status instead. I got pretty annoyed at this because I thought that this guy didn't get it. *This song belongs to people like me*, I thought, *not uptight pricks like him*. However, I was the one who didn't get it. This guy had rock in him, and that was him letting it out. I was offended because I wanted to be different from this guy. I was offended because I wanted to put him in a box with all the other squares and there he was breaking out of it. Rock is transcendent, therefore it transcends. We all have rock within us. It's not how much we have; it's how much we let out.

Elvis is in Joan Rivers, but he's trying to get out, man.
—Mojo Nixon

For this reason, rock is associated with youth; because to hold onto your passion, it takes commitment and hard work, possibly poverty, vilification, and despair. The rock can be almost completely beaten out of you. It is a struggle to keep that part of you alive. But the rock is the very core of you; therefore, it should be fought for tooth and nail. Hell, it should be the fighting.

The fat kid in the Twisted Sister video, in three words, put it best. When the uptight, controlling gym coach asks him, "What do you want to do with your life?" he replies, "I wanna rock!" It clearly summed up what this guy wanted to do. Unfortunately, he will always be that fictional fat kid in the video; we will never see where he went with that sentiment, if he pursued it with every breath that he had. We'll never know if life beat it out of him until he just sang along with jukeboxes in the bar.

So, what rock boils down to is the very essence of the human spirit. It is not a form of music. It is what is in the music itself or the spirit or passion that lies within the listener when they're hearing it. For instance, when somebody says that rock should be gritty and raw, they are mainly saying that they like their ardor to be straight up and not to beat around the bush. They're the same kind of people who would rather you call them at three in the morning having a nervous breakdown than for you to wake up and see a shrink the next day. With this in mind, it is easy to see how rock has the ability to rise above the rigidity of strawman rules set up by the "very true believers" of the rock'n'roll lifestyle. They prefer to stick to rules that define what rocks and what doesn't in strict, binary categories. However, this doesn't fly because rock has the ability to rise above such petty notions. It wants nothing to do with the elitism that some of us would like to confine it to. A completely soulless, shitty, corporate, "rock" band may bring out the rock in someone. In all cases, the rock lies within the listener. They are merely listening to their own soul—not the lack thereof—in the band that they're listening to. The rock will always find its way out.

Why? How?




Illustration by Mitch Clem

Because when someone rocks... they ROCK! The spirit of rock is whatever is the true power of one's soul. Rock is the playful, lustful, resistant, compassionate, selfish, creative, destructive, and self-destructive part of the human spirit. Rock is the essence of yearning to live.

—Craven Rock

SHOUTS FROM



Novelist Chris Walter is a unique figure. A former Winnipeg punk and member of "a series of shitty bands," including The Vacant Lot, Missing Children, and The Hornswogglers, he relocated to Vancouver in 1991 to get away from drugs but became even more deeply involved. By 1998, he was convinced that he wasn't going to live much longer. "I was shooting a lot of coke and OD'd on heroin twice that year. It seemed that my whole life had been a waste and I felt a need to show something for it. I wrote *Beer* in pencil on irregular cardboard that my girlfriend stole from work. My mom in Winnipeg typed it up and sent it back. My girlfriend printed it one-sided on 8½" x 11" paper and we did them up with ring coil binding. Even this crude book was difficult to make under the circumstances. I sold the first copy (excluding friends) to a skater kid at the China Creek skate park. The book was very simple but for me it was a major accomplishment. Since I was still alive, I wrote another book that I wasn't happy with, and then I wrote *Punk Rules OK* which Burn Books published by in 2002. My girlfriend bought me a hot laptop for a hundred bucks, but mostly I used it for collateral with my dope dealer."

This was the beginning of an inspiring and unusual DIY career. Chris cleaned up, continued to write, and ultimately started his own publishing company, GofuckyerselfPress. As of this interview, he's published eleven books of his own and two by other authors. "More than a few people have told me that I'm an inspiration, but that always sounds so weird. Me, an inspiration? I'm just a grouchy old dude who writes books."

Interview by
Allan MacInnis
Layout by
Daryl Gussin





IN THE GUTTER

Punk Writer Chris Walter Spills His Guts

Allan: I was figuring that we could start by your describing the situation in the Downtown Eastside for people who don't come from here.

Chris: For American readers, the Downtown Eastside is Vancouver's drug ghetto, and I've heard from U.S. sources that even the situation in San Francisco's infamous Tenderloin district is not as desperate. For Vancouver City Council, the DTES is an embarrassment, and the new mayor Sam Sullivan—who came to power amidst suspicious circumstances—is doing everything he can to sweep the problem under the rug before the start of the 2010 Winter Olympics. Unfortunately, Sullivan isn't interested in addressing the root issues of drug addiction and homelessness; he's only interested in sanitizing the area. In fact, the city has intensified its war on the poor by eliminating Single Room Occupancies (SRO's) and also by fencing off bridges and other areas where homeless people sleep. Not just that, but the number of homeless people has tripled since the so-called "Liberals" came into power five years ago. This is a double-pronged attack because the province created the homelessness by slashing welfare rates while the city is making it tougher for those same people to find places to sleep. Mayor Sullivan will point to his support of the safe-injection site and his desire to supply addicts with prescription drugs as proof that he is willing to work within the Four Pillars (prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and law-enforcement), but in reality he is only trying to get addicts off the streets and out of the public eye.

If he wanted to address the root

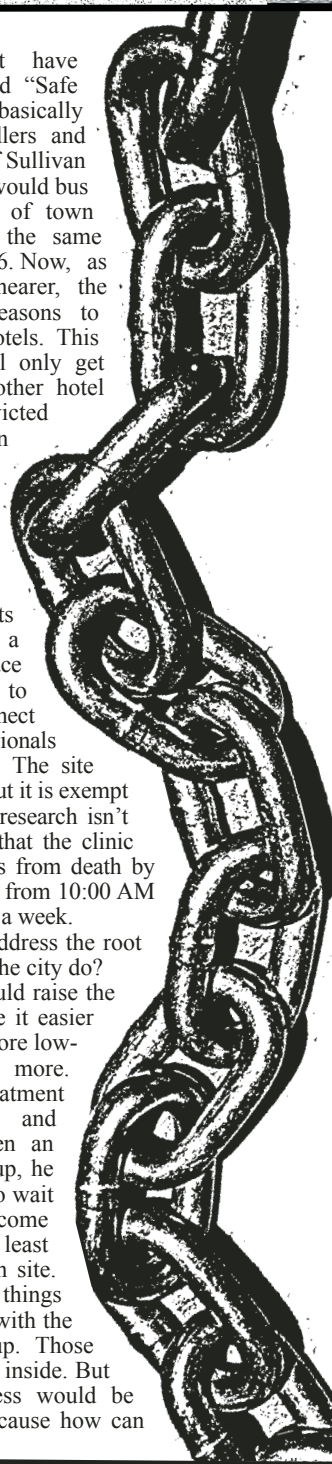
causes, he wouldn't have supported the so-called "Safe Streets Act," which is basically an attack on panhandlers and squeegee punks. If Sullivan had his way, he would bus the "undesirables" out of town before the Olympics the same way Atlanta did in '96. Now, as the Olympics draw nearer, the city keeps finding reasons to close more welfare hotels. This is a problem that will only get worse. Just today, another hotel owner on the DTES evicted his tenants so he can renovate to cash in on the Olympics.

Allan: Hold up a second. Explain how our safe injection site works.

Chris: Since opening its doors, Insite has been a safe, health-focused place where people can go to inject drugs and connect with health care professionals and addiction services. The site doesn't provide drugs but it is exempt from prosecution. The research isn't complete, but is clear that the clinic has saved many addicts from death by overdose. Insite is open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 AM, seven days a week.

Allan: How do you "address the root causes"? What should the city do?

Chris: First, they should raise the welfare rates and make it easier to get. Then we need more low-income housing. *Lots* more. We need more treatment centers, detoxes, and recovery houses. When an addict wants to clean up, he or she shouldn't have to wait for days for a bed to become available. We need at least one more safe-injection site. Sadly, none of these things will provide an addict with the motivation to clean up. Those things must come from inside. But addressing homelessness would be a big step forward, because how can





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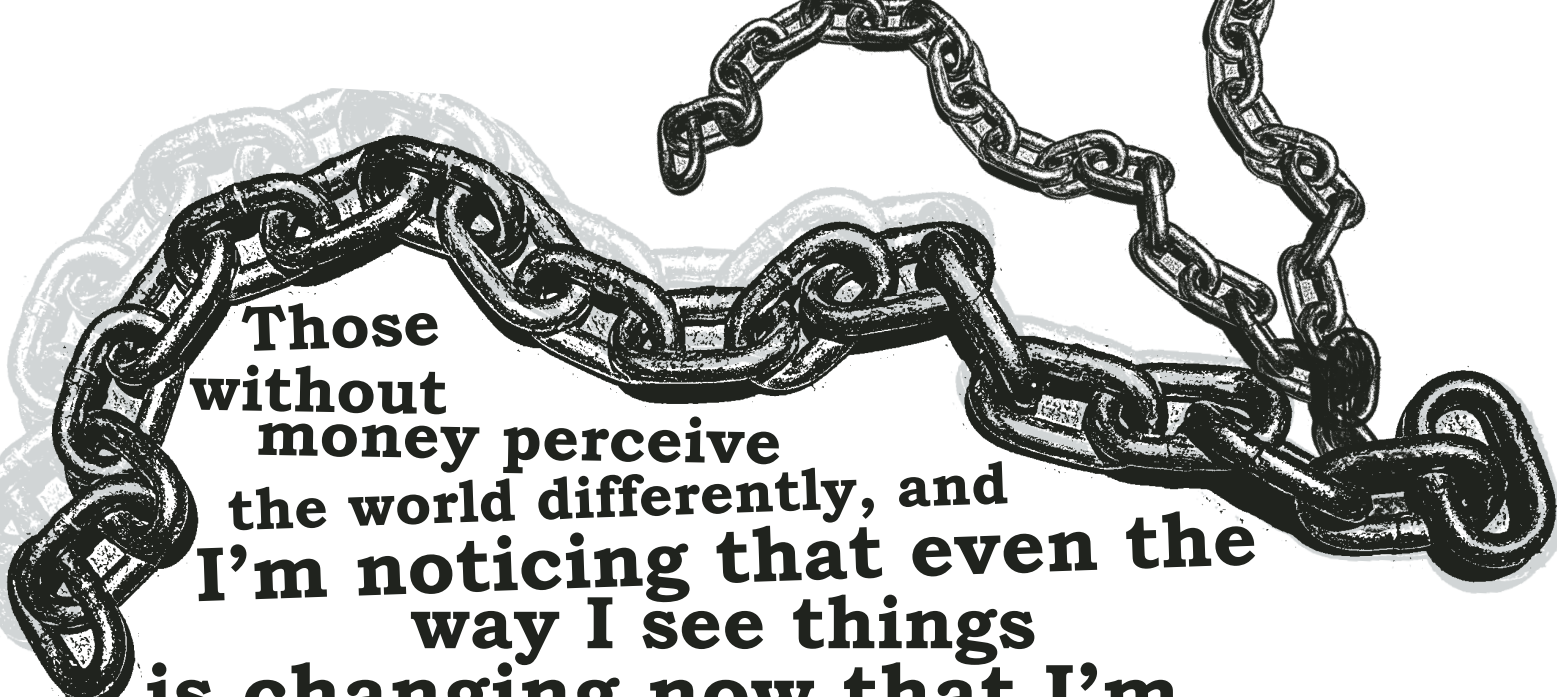
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people straighten out their lives if they live in a box in the alley? The city says that the two-year limit on welfare doesn't apply to people with addiction issues or mental problems, but I sure see a lot of fucked up homeless addicts out there. More people than ever are falling between the cracks.

Allan: What motivated you to clean up?

Chris: I was homeless at the time, and my life was as messed up as it could be. My girlfriend kicked me out for using drugs when I was supposed to be watching our five-month-old son. As fucked up as things were, I only checked into detox so that my girlfriend would let me move back in—not that I wanted to be a dad and raise my son—but I couldn't think of anyone else who would put up with me. When I got out of detox nine days later, I was stunned to find that my girl wouldn't take me back. I had no alternative but to check into a recovery house for a minimum three-month stay. Surprisingly, my attitude began to change after a while. It dawned on me that maybe I wouldn't have to use drugs the rest of my life, wouldn't have to die in the gutter. I moved back in with my girl and our son after I'd been clean for five months, and, in retrospect, I should've stayed at the recovery house longer. Things were very scary at first, as my girl and I were broke and had no idea how to raise a child. Somehow, we muddled along and I finished *Mosquitoes & Whisky*, which I had put on hold when the shit hit the fan. I worried that I wouldn't be able to write without liquor and drugs, but in reality, it was much easier. I didn't have to get my laptop back from the dope dealer every other day.

Allan: In terms of the effects of class, I've heard it said that "community values" are stronger in a place like the DTES than anywhere else in the city. Would you agree?

Chris: Sure. If you're passed-out drunk on the sidewalk on East Hastings, you might get rolled but someone might also try to help you

up. In the West End, they'd just step over you. The thing about the DTES is that everyone knows each other. When it comes to drugs, it's every man and woman for themselves, but that's understood. If you fuck enough people over down there, you'll get what's coming to you. It's important not to burn the wrong people for too much.

Allan: Are you in touch with anyone you know from your drug using days? Are any of them aware of your writing, and do people in NA read your stuff?

Chris: Sure, I'm still in contact with some of my old pals, but we don't hang out much. Many of them are dead, but others read my books. Not everyone I knew was an addict. I have a few friends who can drink without going on a three-day binge. Some people in NA like my stuff, but others can't read it without feeling uncomfortable.

Allan: I particularly like the passage in *East Van* where Dill finally goes to a meeting, and is sitting in horror listening to people talk about becoming a "productive member of society...". I suspected that might have been how you felt.

Chris: One might argue that I am a "productive member of society," but I have issues with that. I believe that our value system is fucked because we place the acquisition of money above all else. I don't want to part of a society where 10% of the people control 90% of the wealth. Fuck society.

Allan: Dill becomes a political activist at one point, fighting against a corporation that wants to evict people from SRO's to make condos. Have you ever gotten politically active? Have you done anything for DERA (Downtown Eastside Residents Association), or the Portland Hotel Society, since your last interview?

Chris: I've been to a few protests, but I'm no activist. I feel as if I should get more involved because the homeless situation here is clearly

getting worse. I'm too damn selfish with my time, though I am making an effort to help the Union Gospel Mission serve a few meals. I like hanging with the junkies and the whores. I feel comfortable on the DTES.

Allan: As grouchy a persona as you put out there, it seems like you want to help show people that it's *possible* to clean up. After the often painful and unpleasant things that happen in the course of these novels, you seem to want to give them at least *somewhat* hopeful endings.

Chris: I try to inject—forgive me—hope into my novels because without hope we have nothing. As bitter as I am towards society, I know that there are people out there who feel much the same way I do, and that gives me hope. And yes, I do want people to know that there is life after drugs. When I cleaned up, I thought that I would never be able to have fun again. In fact, I found freedom, and with freedom comes fun.

Allan: I'd be curious to know what you do for fun.

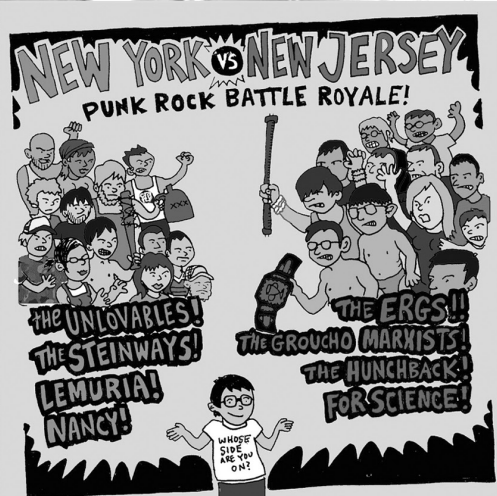
Chris: Well, writing is fun, but I like to go to punk rock shows or hang out with my family. My girlfriend Jen and I get out about once a month. She takes photographs and I review the shows for several rock magazines. We go wherever the bands we want to see are playing, sometimes to the Cobalt, but other times to the Commodore, Dicks on Dicks, Pub 340, or even the Railway Club. Sadly, many clubs seem to be closing to make room for more damn condos. Also, we go to Trout Lake or take the car to the beach. There is no shortage of places to go here. I hardly ever watch TV, but if I'm not at a show on Saturday night then I watch *America's Most Wanted* with my family and eat chocolate candies. Where I come from, it's fun just to decide what I want to eat for supper. In the past, the selection was usually limited to generic macaroni and cheese or stale bagels from the food bank.

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I don't have time to start slagging all the writers I hate.

Allan: I remember; you were talking in a past interview about the need for "more writers from the streets and alleys." I agree, but can you explain?

Chris: Those without money perceive the world differently, and I'm noticing that even the way I see things is changing now that I'm not so desperately broke. Most writers come from backgrounds that are more privileged and, as a result, they write about things that aren't interesting to me. I want to read about punks, drunks, junkies, and whores because those people are real. Publishers won't publish books by or for the likes of me because they're too busy catering to the tastes of the upper classes. I wish I knew of more writers who like the same things I do. I recently discovered a black American author named Donald Goines, who wrote about many of my favourite topics until he was gunned down in 1974 during a botched drug deal. Let Douglas Coupland write about Silicon Valley or Generation X'ers, because that's what people with money want to read. But that's not for me. Margaret Atwood? I'd rather read a true crime magazine.

Allan: Are there any writers whose writing you absolutely, passionately hate? Do you check out a lot of other writers, or do you mostly focus on your own writing?

Chris: I don't have time to start slagging all the writers I hate. I read rock biographies, true crime (especially books about outlaw bikers), and, of course, Bukowski and Irvine Welsh. My favourite "classic" writer is John Steinbeck

because he wrote about real-life situations and he portrayed poor people with compassion and empathy. I also like Brett Easton Ellis, John Irving, Hunter S. Thompson, and Tom Wolfe, even though he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. A few Canadian writers I like are Kenneth J. Harvey, John Armstrong, and Michael Turner.

Allan: What are some of your personal favourites of your own books?

Chris: *Mosquitoes & Whisky*, *East Van*, and *Kaboom* are probably my favorites. For some reason, *Mosquitoes & Whisky*, and especially *Kaboom*, are my poorest sellers. Altogether, *Kaboom* has sold less than a thousand copies, and it's been out since 2001. The book is almost out of print, so I'm going to re-edit, give it a new cover, and change the synopsis on the back. The story also deals with addiction, but is set in Vancouver and New York City, and has a strong subplot that winds neatly throughout the book. I wrote the ending and worked my way from back to front. The ending catches most people off guard. *Mosquitoes and Whisky* is the first book of a semi-autobiographical trilogy, and I feel that I captured not only the dysfunction of my early childhood, but the humor as well. I'm tough on myself and think that most of my books could be better, but those three came out just the way I wanted them to.

Allan: What are you working on now?

Chris: We're gearing up to launch *Shouts from the Gutter*, which is a collection of my short stories. Some I wrote long ago but others are brand new. Some of them are stronger than others, but that's the way it is with short stories. I'm happy with this book. I have also started my next book, *Rock & Roll Heart*, which is tale of lust, rock'n'roll, and betrayal. For reasons I'm not ready to discuss yet, this one is personal. GFY Press has also agreed to publish Australian writer Drew Gates. *The Crooked Beat*, which is about the adventures of a punk junkie in Southeast Asia, will be out in 2008. Drew's writing is like mine in the respect that he writes about harsh subjects but uses humor to keep it from being too bleak. At GFY, we're very excited about this project.

Allan: There's a lot of fucking in *Welfare Wednesdays*, and a bit of romance. Was that the first time you'd tackled that sort of subject matter? Was it a challenge?

Chris: Fucking is nothing new in my books—you can't have life without fucking. The romance was harder because I didn't want to write any weepy shit. I'm not completely happy with the way the romance stuff turned out, but I was reasonably satisfied. I always feel that there is room for improvement in my writing, and I try to learn a little more with each book. I still feel that I have much to learn as a writer.

Allan: At the end of the book, after a ride through hell, your characters make a go of living a "comfortable middle-class life" for awhile in a West End apartment. It doesn't really work—it's not the right life for them. Are you starting to feel as if you've found your place in the world?

Chris: At the end of *Welfare Wednesdays*, the protagonists leave the West End to embark on

a cross-country trip. I wanted to show how they rejected middle-class values, even though they were no longer using hard drugs. They were still drinking because it's my experience that most people who give up hard drugs still drink and/or smoke pot. Some slide back into hard drugs, but not all of them. I can't do that, though. It wouldn't be enough for me to smoke pot or drink beer; I'd want coke and smack too. Then I'd be fucked. As for me, I'm happy with what I do, but I don't know if I'll ever feel comfortable in this world.

Allan: Any news on film adaptations of your books?

Chris: The *Boozecan* project is on hiatus because the producer we were working with wanted us to make changes we didn't like. Telefilm hasn't turned us down for funding, but we need to find another producer. It's a drag because we were just starting to make real headway. The *Punk Rules OK* project is still moving forward, but I didn't have a hand in writing the screenplay and I'll only be onboard as an advisor. The two things I've learned about the movie industry are that everyone thinks they know how to make your screenplay better, and everything takes forever.

Allan: It seems like people really like you in the Vancouver punk scene. I've read you on the Cobalt discussion board, and Todd Serious of the Rebel Spell was talking about how he really admires your work ethic and your writing. How do you cope with people admiring you?

Chris: I'm sure there are many people out there who don't like me. I'm not out to win any popularity contests, and I don't take compliments too seriously. If I buy into them, then I'd have to accept criticism as well. I just do my thing and try not to get a swelled head.

Allan: Any favorite bands currently on the local scene, or do you mostly listen to the music of your youth?

Chris: There are many good local bands. The Rebel Spell, the Black Halos, and Alternate Action are my favorites, but I also like the Slickjacks, the Jolts, Cobra City, the Neo Nasties, Spitfires, Tranzmitors, Bughouse Five, Subhumans, Big John Bates, China Creeps, Aging Youth Gang, Mr. Plow, DOA, Igniters. Shit, the list is so long that I'm sure to forget someone. My favorite all-time punk bands are the Ramones, Personality Crisis, the Damned, Iggy Pop, Circle Jerks, DOA, TSOL, the Germs, the Saints, Adolescents, UK Subs, and Black Flag.

Allan: Ever been tempted to do anything musically, lately?

Chris: I write songs for my books, and I've written a few acoustic songs, but I haven't been playing my guitar much lately. My limitations as a guitarist frustrate me. The guitar won't do what I want it to, but the typer is much more accommodating.

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Circle One

interviewed by Jimmy Alvarado & Todd Taylor
photos and artwork courtesy of Mike Vallejo
intro by Jimmy Alvarado
GOING AGAINST
THE GRAIN
an interview with
Mike Vallejo
Part 2

In terms of punk rock longevity, Mike Vallejo is a lifer. Thirty-one years after first putting the first Ramones album on the turntable, he remains actively involved in punk, not only as proprietor of a cool record store, Feedback Records, and fan, but also as guitarist for the reformed Circle One, the band he founded whose history now spans three decades. In this second part of our interview, Mike discusses Circle One's controversial history, the death of its charismatic and troubled lead singer, the band's reemergence, and what's kept him involved for so long, all delivered with honesty and maybe a touch of wry humor.

Todd: What was so charming and convincing about John, besides his stature? He seemed to collect people around him.

Mike: He had that charisma. He could just walk in with this look on his face and you'd know that he was the "business" guy, "I want to follow this guy." He was definitely a leader. I didn't really see that at first. I just saw him as a prankster. A pothead prankster.

Todd: Did he come into contact with Darby (Crash) at all?

Mike: Yeah. There's a funny story, too. At Oki Dog's, we were all just hanging out, and the Germs were there—Darby and Lorna and their crowd—and pretty much all of us were there. I remember I was talking to somebody and Mike Ituarte was yelling out, "Who are you staring at? What are you looking at?" It was Darby Crash, and Mike Ituarte was all, "Fuck, man." John was walking toward [Darby], and was going to pretty much knock

him out, and then I stopped John and go, "John, that's Darby Crash, man." And he looks at me and goes [in a meek, childish voice], "Okay," and walks back. [laughs] He didn't recognize him. He didn't know because I don't think he had seen them yet, live. And I was like, "Dude, dude, that's Darby. We named the band after him."

Jimmy: There was, in between the Hollywood scene and everybody else, a gap. Do you remember there being any kind of tension between you guys and the older crowd?

Mike: Not really.

Jimmy: Outside of trying to beat up Darby Crash? [laughs]

Mike: We didn't have a problem with them. I think the older crowd had problems with us, because we were the young rabble-rousers. We were the next generation, the second generation, which was a lot different than the first generation of punks back then.

Todd: Do you subscribe to the theory repeated over and over again that the violence killed the scene, that it died in '79 or '80?

Mike: Yeah, well, it didn't die. It transformed into something else and they didn't like it.

Todd: But do you subscribe to the notion that it got more violent? That a lot of people got out of it?

Mike: Just the older people got out of it because it wasn't their thing. Bands like us and Wasted Youth and TSOL and Black Flag kind of stayed through the whole thing. All those younger kids went to Black Flag, too, and the Germs. The Germs were around for a while, too.

Jimmy: And the Bags, too, right?

Mike: Yeah.

Todd: Middle Class.

Mike: Yeah. Middle Class was my favorite band back then. I loved that band. But it was the older, first-generation punk people who had a problem with us. We never had a problem with them. I loved that stuff. I always looked up to those people.

Todd: Did it ever manifest itself? Like there was straight up conflict between the two groups?

Mike: Not really. Sometimes they would have Starwood shows—they'd put the Alley Cats and the Screws together, and those are two different types of bands. The older people would see the Alley Cats and the HB'ers (Huntington Beach) would see the Screws. Or they'd go see the Germs and the Screws. But it was never really a clash. I think the older people just faded away because they didn't want anything to do with the whole new second generation-type stuff.

Jimmy: Do you think there was any legitimacy to their complaints that it was too violent?

Mike: Yeah. I only went to the Masque once, but I really loved that Hollywood scene, even though a lot of them were snobs. I just loved that scene, but I was too young to drive and I didn't like the bus, so I only went there once, but I loved it, man. I fell in love with it. And it was so mellow. I've got a video of the Weirdos at the Masque and you see the people—they're all older, long-hair people that look kind of weird, with "punk" written on their shirt in marker and a bandana around their sleeve. But it was really mellow. To me it was more drug-influenced.

Jimmy: Contrast that with what happened later. What was it like after the Masque scene compared to the hardcore scene?

Mike: I think it got bigger. Kids from other cities, especially from Orange County. I think a lot of the Orange County kids brought a lot of that violence. I think a lot of the Orange County kids were ex-jocks, people that just

wanted to drink and fight. There were some mean, mean fights at the Starwood, and John was involved in that stuff, too. They would just single a person out and then everybody would just beat him up, and that's the way it was. That's how they had their fun then. They would single somebody out who they thought, "This guy doesn't belong here. This guy has long hair, so let's kick his ass." I remember one time they singled me out and they were just about ready to jump me and John said, "No! No! He's in our band!" I came really close to an ass-kicking.

Jimmy: And that was at the Starwood?

Mike: That was at the Starwood. Starwood was pretty violent. It was always like that. The difference was there were more kids. It just got bigger, where the early punk stuff, it was just all the Hollywood people. They all knew each other and they were just interested in taking Quaaludes and drinking and that was about it.

Todd: This is pretty far out in left field: Did sexuality play into Circle One at all? Because I'm thinking about—talking to people about the early punk scene—it seemed to be a lot more free. It was pre-AIDS, although you still had STDs.

Mike: The second wave was definitely an abandonment from sexuality, I think. The first generation was a lot of sexuality, I thought. Maybe I'm just being naïve because I was younger then, but when I started going out and playing, John was always against going out with girls. He'd say, "They're just gonna fuck you up. You gotta stick to being in a band." The macho-type thing.

Todd: Right, and also following into militancy.

Mike: Yeah, exactly.

Todd: "Don't smile, play your instrument."

Mike: "Do this, do that." We never did interviews just because John

didn't really want to. I was just like, fuck, I don't care. It's cool with me.

Jimmy: Didn't you get interviewed by *We Got Power*, though?

Mike: Yeah, but that was different. They were our friends. [laughs] It was the guys from Sin 34. I think they asked John to do this interview. That was the only one, *We Got Power*. Oh, and *Destroy LA*, but that was way later. I know other people wanted to interview us and we got offered other shows, but we always turned them down.

Jimmy: Henry Rollins likes to mock the whole period even though he was so involved in the scene. But now he likes to imply that it was this latent homosexual thing that went on with the hardcore scene—the sweaty guys running into each other. Do you see any of that as being accurate?

Mike: No. I don't think so. [In a joking, fake tough guy affectation.] We always kicked the fags' asses. I have nothing against homosexuals. There were some into the scene. They didn't really come out then, but they were definitely homosexual. I didn't have a problem with them. I know John did, and he expressed it in his lyrics. But I didn't

Mike playing guitar at rehearsal. Photo by Mark Bustamante, 1981

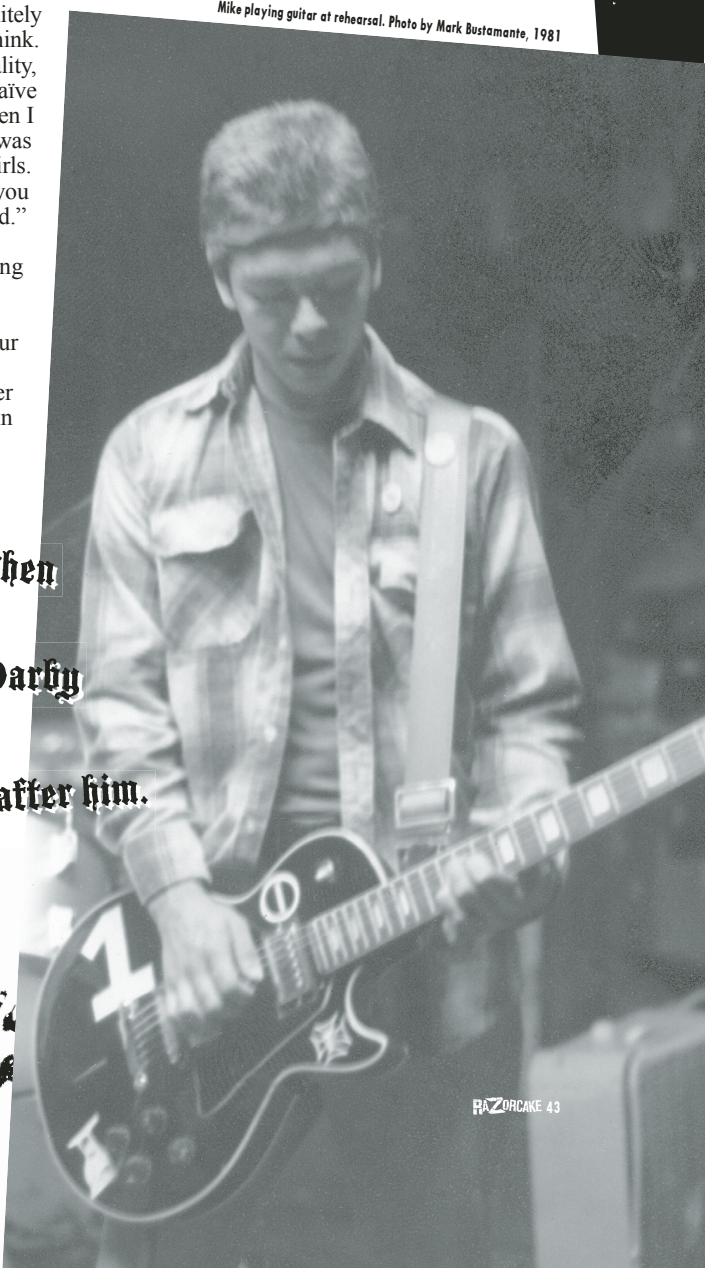
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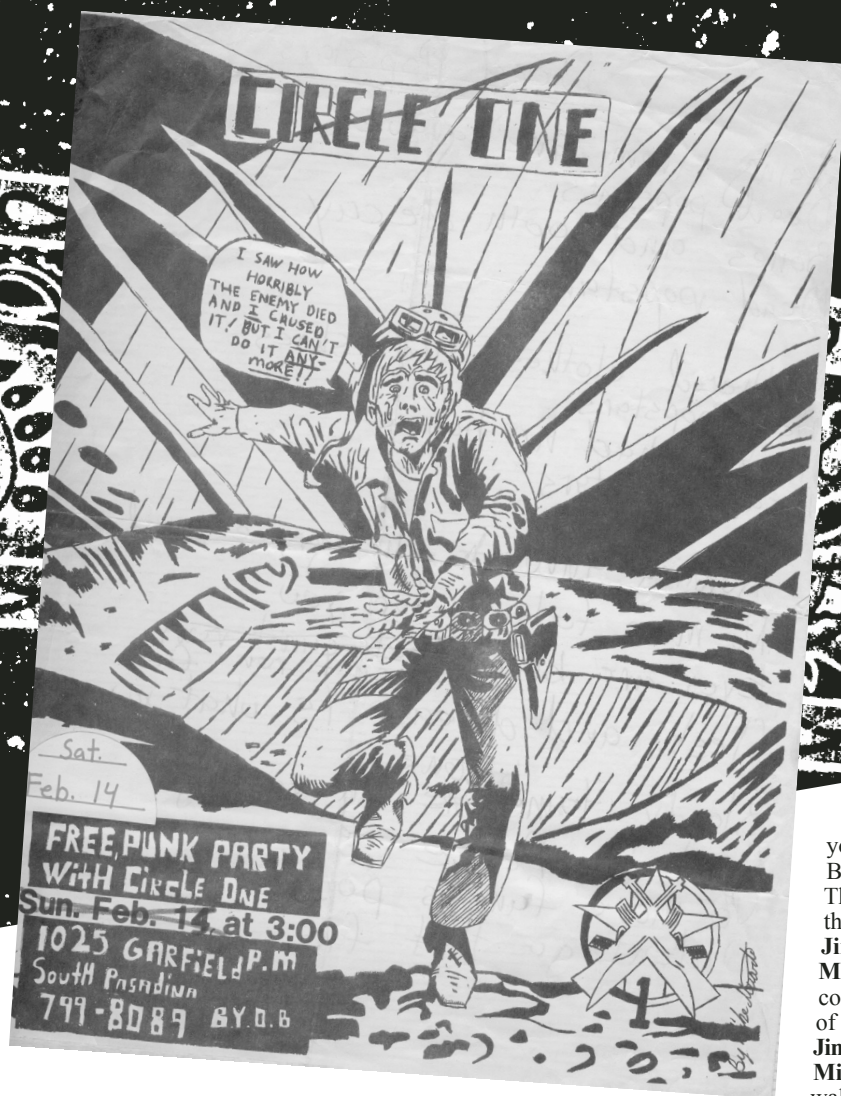
going to pretty much knock him out. and then

I stopped John and go, "John, that's Darby

Crash, man." He didn't recognize him. We

named the band after him.





really see it as a homosexual-type thing, the guys slamming. I saw it as a big macho thing, which I never really did—only to the Middle Class and only at the Starwood. But, no, I didn't really see it as that. If they were slamming and rubbing each other and kissing, I could see that, but they weren't doing that.

Jimmy: What about "PUNX"? Where did that come from?

Mike: John started that. I don't know if I remember what it stood for. "Patriots Unified Now," and X was "unknown quantity." I don't know how that worked out. John started that organization at the same time, a little after BYO did their thing and Goldenvoice. It was just a way to promote shows, promote the punk scene, stuff like that.

Jimmy: It was just to promote shows?

Mike: Yeah. It was one of our songs, too, and then it transformed into a way to promote shows. John always did shows. He put on more shows than we played, probably.

Jimmy: So he was the one that did it? I always thought it was you who was involved in that.

Mike: I helped him with the Oxnard bands. I'd always have those guys come because they were all my friends. I always helped him get bands, but it was his thing.

Jimmy: How did you talk (roller derby legend and T-Bird Rollerdom owner) Ralphie Valladares into letting you guys have the shows at the T-Bird?

Mike: Oh, the T-Bird was John's idea. I don't know how he got that. He just walked into there and started talking to them, and they hit it off. And they loved the punk scene. Big John, the T-Bird guy, really liked it a lot. I remember going there and at the end of the show he's all, "I love

you kids! You guys are more than welcome to come by again." But it was probably because they made a lot of money, too. Those shows were always pretty much packed and, before that, they were doing nothing. It was always empty.

Jimmy: What were the shows like at the T-Bird?

Mike: They were a lot of fun. It was pretty chaotic. It was cool. I wish I would have filmed and recorded more then. A lot of great bands played there.

Jimmy: Do you think its location suppressed a lot of the violence?

Mike: Yeah. That was a pretty bad area at that time. I remember walking there—I lived a quarter of a mile away—but I would always walk there and I would see punks walking down Whittier Boulevard—the Pico Viejo side, the bad area—and I would be like, "Fuck, I'm not even going to walk down that area."

Jimmy: That's funny, because that's something that comes up a lot about that place. That and the Vex.

Mike: The Vex was pretty bad too, but I didn't know that it was that bad at that time.

Jimmy: Which Vex was this?

Mike: The first one. The one on Brooklyn and Gage.

Todd: Can you tell us the story of the day that John was killed?

Mike: We had gotten back together. That was, what, 1991? We had three or four shows lined up. We had done two and they were going pretty well. Our last show with John was one of the best shows that we did.

Jimmy: Was this when (second guitarist John) Blakely was in the band?

Mike: Yeah. Blakely was in the band and me and Jody and John. That was one of our best shows. John (Macias) was definitely not as fit as he was back then, and he had a moustache. People were tripping out, "Hey, this is John?" But once he hit the stage, forget it, man. He still had the look, still had the stare, still had the moves. He didn't have the chains. He didn't have the cut-off shirt with the muscles showing. He was just wearing Levi's and a shirt.

Jimmy: Yeah, I have that video from Fenders. No offense, but he looked like a cop.

Mike: Fenders was where he had the war paint.

Jimmy: No, no. He had a moustache. He looked like somebody's dad. Like a suburban dad who might be a cop.

Mike: That was Spanky's. That was our last show. That was early

May, and, like I said, that was one of our best shows. After the show, he lost his keys and we had to get his dad to come pick us up, and then four days after that was when he got shot, so that was really the last time I saw him. He seemed okay then. He was really, really quiet. I took control of the band then as opposed to him always saying what we did. I was doing the shows, I told John what songs to do. He was a totally different person, but once he hit the stage it was the same John, but he didn't hang out. When we did that Spanky's show—and when we did this show before that—none of our crowd was there, so he was kind of lost. He kept to himself. Some people would come up to him, "Hey, John, how's it going?" And he was all, "Hey, what's up?"

At that time I was living in Long Beach, and it was pretty common that we didn't see each other or talk for a week, at the most. But I just got a call from his brother. He was hysterical over the phone, saying, "John's dead! John's dead! John's dead!" And I'm like, "What the fuck?" He said, "Yeah, they shot him in Santa Monica." I could hear people yelling in the background at his house, and he kind of told me the story really quick. The whole thing hit me really hard, like, "What the fuck?" But I just remember that and hanging up the phone and just walking through a couple miles in Long Beach, just figuring out what was going on, because I had known the guy since we were sixteen.

It was more of a shock than a sad thing. It took me by surprise. It was a shock for about a week, then I mourned after that week about it. Then it really hit me and I got into that second phase of mourning. It was just kind of like, "Well, that's what happened." I knew something was going to happen, but I didn't think it was going to be this drastic.

Apparently, that day, from what his mom told me, he was going to San Diego for something, but he ended up going to Santa Monica and preaching to people, yelling, preaching the gospel, yelling. He went into a parking lot. They chased him out of there. He went to another parking lot, preaching. They chased him out of there.

Somehow he ended up at the pier in Santa Monica and apparently was out of control, yelling at people, trying to break into a car. He threw someone over the pier, but it was the part where you land in the sand still. It wasn't in the water, and it was a deep fall. He broke his [the person he threw] ankle and his leg. It was an off-duty security guard. The guy was like, "Hey, what's up?" And John felt threatened, and at that time John wasn't really in shape, but he was still dangerous. Somebody called the cops. The cops came. John saw them and started walking towards them and, from what I was told, he had his arm under his jacket, so the cop was thinking, "He might have a weapon under there." The cop told him to stop. John just kept walking toward him. The cop shot him four to five times—chest and head—and John stopped a few feet in front of him. And that was it.

Jimmy: What was your relationship with him over the years?

Mike: A band mate, but even when the band wasn't happening, we were always good friends. He was my best friend.

Jimmy: You said the band ended for a while.

Mike: Yeah, it ended about two or three times. The first time it ended with the

original lineup, we all went to Mike Sleepy's house, and John goes, "I've got to talk with everyone. I got a message in a dream that I can't be seen in the band anymore, so I'm leaving the band." So we're all, "Okay."

Jimmy: Was this God related?

Mike: Yeah, God related. "I'm getting these messages. I can't do this right now," so we're all, "Okay." Then he goes, "Do you guys want to do something else or do you want to go on your own?" And we're all, "We're gonna go on our own." We were going to get someone else, but then I called John up the next day. "Dude, let's start something up again." So a couple months later we started Circle One up again, just with Jody (Hill) and Danny (Dourman). But there were several times when that happened. "I can't do this anymore." It was all mental disability stuff. I think throughout his whole life he had mental problems.

Todd: This is concurrent with Reagan. Reagan decimated the mental health system in California. So did you see any direct effects of that?

Mike: Yeah. He went through a lot of different phases. There was a three-year period where I didn't see him. He was living in the (San Fernando) Valley. I remember the Sylmar Boys visited him, and they said, "We went to visit John and the guy is only eating rice and wears a potato sack. That's it. Doesn't wear any clothes. Stays in his room and reads the Bible seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. That's all he does." And he had a beard then. Beard and long hair. And he went to Israel for four or five days and came back and started freaking out again. He had gone through different phases. I hadn't seen him for a long time and he walked to my house. He had a beard and told me that mankind was coming to an end, that you only had a few more months and that you had to repent. And I said, "Yeah, I know, John," and after that we talked about music. He was always cool. He never pushed it on me. He never said, "Oh! You've gotta go to church," never pushed it on me. He brought it up a couple times and that was it.

Todd: This seems to be a recurring thing for you. You could walk into potentially harmful or life-changing things, but you seem almost unaffected by them. You're internalizing things, but you're not being attacked or being pushed too hard, whether because you're in the band or your personality. Do you think that would be a correct assessment?

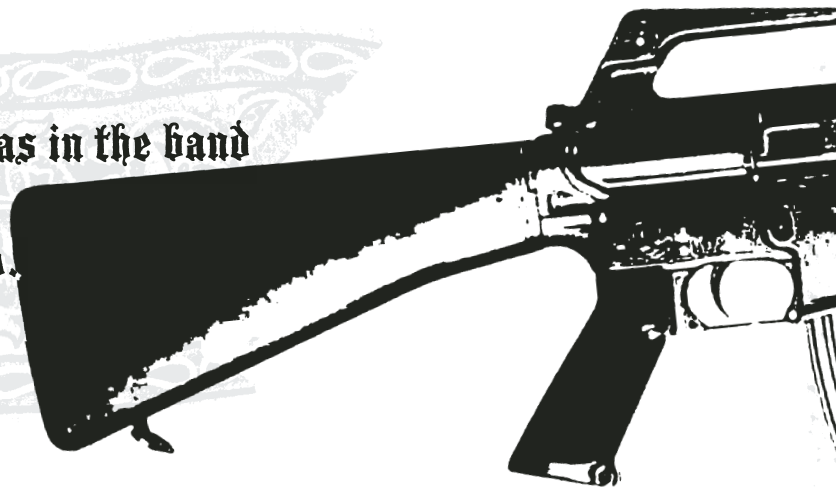
Mike: Yeah. I've been through several situations where I was in that

I just can't
turn my back
on punk rock.



Mike Vallejo: bass, John Martinez: vocals, Mike Vallejo: guitar, Bill Hurvitz: drums. Photos by Jody Hill, 1982, unknown LA '86.

**I've been in other situations
where I didn't want to say that I was in the band
because I would have gotten
my ass kicked.**



position, but, for some reason, I just knew the right people. I've been lucky enough. I've been in other situations where I didn't want to say that I was in the band because I would have gotten my ass kicked. I wasn't a troublemaker even though a lot of people I knew were, but because we were friends and everyone knew that I started the band, I was respected. I think that was what it was.

Jimmy: There were a lot of drug issues in the band, through different members in different periods. Was the band very volatile at the same time?

Mike: John and Jody would butt heads all the time. I had to stop them. I had to stop John from killing Jody a few times. Danny wasn't really a problem, although he is now. He wasn't a problem then.

Jimmy: He's in the band again now?

Mike: Yeah, and everyone in the band now is sober. Everyone was in the program except me. I can see the difference in them between now and when they first joined the band. I can deal with it. Certain people can't.

Jimmy: Did the drug use feed into the music?

Mike: Oh, yeah, definitely. Everybody had their own hang-ups. John was into the scene and then the drugs fed into that. I was either hanging out with friends or always involved with other bands or music, too. Jody was just into partying and hanging out with his Arcadia crowd. Danny was from the Valley, so he had all his friends he would hang out with. Somehow we all managed to work together as a band, although we were all different.

Jimmy: How did Blakely get into the band?

Mike: Through Jody. I didn't know him until Jody brought him and the bass player, Tony. They had just gone through the program, and I think he had just gotten clean when he joined the band. He had a hard time adjusting. I was always partying and John was always smoking. But Jody was there to help.

Jimmy: Did you know of Blakely's prior background in bands like Laughing Matter?

Mike: He told me, but I didn't know about him or his prior bands. But he was a good guitar player, and he was cool, and we worked well together. We had Tim Gilman for a while, too, as a second guitar player. Tim was really cool, but he was more rock'n'rollish-type stuff.

Jimmy: So you had the legacy of this band, right? The singer—I guess the equivalent would be Jello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys—the singer is the embodiment of the band, and

now the singer is gone. How did you start up the band again?

Mike: I wasn't going to start up the band. We were doing a band called the Wasted Ones for a while, which was just covers of Circle One and Wasted Youth, because our bass player (Danny Dourman) also played in Wasted Youth. Then Sam, a local kid here, said, "Hey, why doesn't Wasted Ones play a backyard party?" "All right. We'll play a backyard party." At that time our drummer quit—Eric who played in Dr. Know—and we were like, "Fuck! We need a drummer." And I was like, "I'll ask Jody." Then Sam said, "Why don't you just go with Circle One if you're gonna have Jody, Danny, and you?" And I'm like, "Well, we'll do Circle One one time. We'll get the singer from the Wasted Ones to sing," and it just clicked. I thought we were going to play just that one time as Circle One. I think five hundred kids showed up to a backyard to see us.

Jimmy: When was this?

Mike: This was two years ago in La Puente. Nobody was over sixteen there.

Jimmy: How was the show?

Mike: It was great. One of our best shows. There was no stage. Everybody was bumpin' into us. We were at eye level with the audience. Ever since then I've been like, "Fuck, let's continue and see how far we can take it."

Jimmy: Who's in the band now?

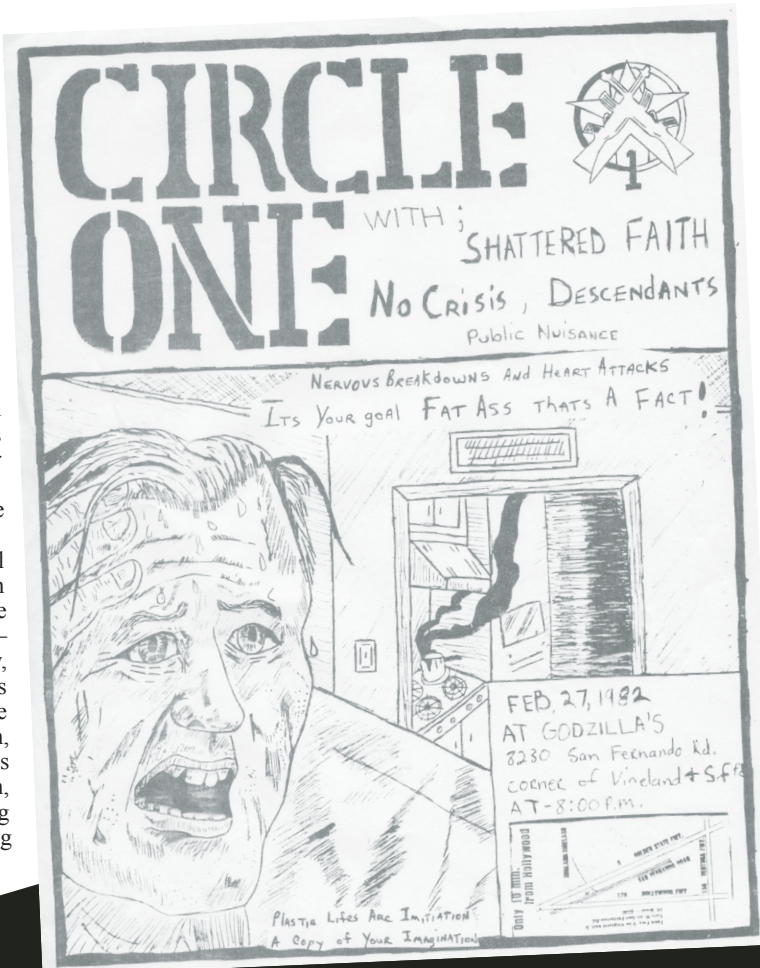
Mike: Myself, Jody Hill on drums, Danny Dourman on bass—which is the *Patterns of Force* lineup—and then we got this guy, Billy Brown, singing. He's a good singer. At first, he sounded a lot like John, I think because he was trying to sing like John, but now he's developing his own style. It's working out well.

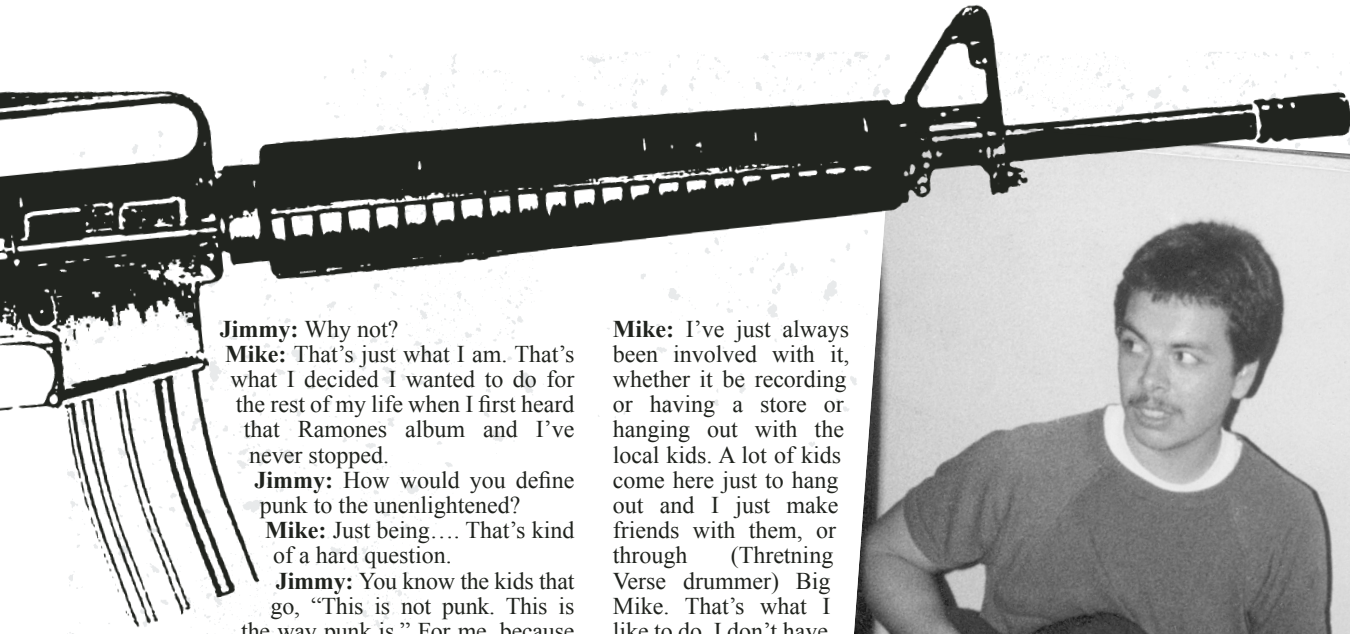
Todd: So you've remained active this whole time. What's the span of years? You started in '80, so twenty-seven years?

Mike: Yeah. I started listening to punk in '76, and then I've been into the whole scene from then to now. I started the band in '80. I consider it my band because I started it. Even Mike Ituarte would admit that.

Todd: You've also been a producer, you've helped other bands out, you've owned a record store....

Mike: I had a recording studio for a while. I recorded a bunch of local punk bands. That's all I would do—local punk bands. Since I was fifteen, I've been involved in the scene somehow. Other people are like, "Wow! That was me then, and this is me now," and they've gone to other things, which is cool. But I just can't turn my back on punk rock.





Jimmy: Why not?

Mike: That's just what I am. That's what I decided I wanted to do for the rest of my life when I first heard that Ramones' album and I've never stopped.

Jimmy: How would you define punk to the unenlightened?

Mike: Just being.... That's kind of a hard question.

Jimmy: You know the kids that go, "This is not punk. This is the way punk is." For me, because

I've got maybe four or five years less time involved than you it might be different, and each person has a different meaning and attaches a different identity to it. It's a very broad term, but it's very personalized, and we both know it's more than mohawks and belts.

Mike: It's weird because it has meant different things. And now it really doesn't mean the same from when I first got into it. When I first got into it, it was an identity, a way of life. That's what it was to me. It's what I've lived with since I was fifteen years old, but it has just changed so much. Punk now can be buying a bullet belt and having a mohawk. Punk is different to everyone. What is punk to me I know is not punk to younger kids. To me, it's just a personal identity thing. What I think punk is now.... That's a hard question. It's just being an individual and not being like everyone else. Making your own rules, that's what punk is to me. Starting your own scene and supporting it. It's pretty much what I started with and what I believe in now. Even though there is a scene now, a lot of kids are like, "Aw, there are too many bands." You've got to support your own scene. That, to me, is what it is.

Jimmy: It's interesting that you say that because when we were younger in East L.A., bands that I didn't like, either musically or personally, I still supported. It seems to me that's not the case anymore. It's weird because you've got these localized scenes, groups of friends who get along with each other, and they don't like anybody else. Do you see that as kind of the case?

Mike: Yeah. A lot of that still goes on. San Gabriel Valley has a really big scene. Since I've opened this store [Feedback Records] I've met all kinds of kids in this area. So many bands you've never heard of because they only play local backyards. There are a lot of local bands and they all have their own scene. I still go to backyard parties. I'm the oldest guy there. I'm forty-four years old and there's nothing but fourteen to sixteen-year-old kids there, and I still go to those things.

Jimmy: How do you keep yourself doing that? How have you been able to keep in touch with that?

Mike: I've just always been involved with it, whether it be recording or having a store or hanging out with the local kids. A lot of kids come here just to hang out and I just make friends with them, or through (Thretning Verse drummer) Big Mike. That's what I like to do. I don't have any other interests outside of punk and music, really. I just hang out with people associated with punk rock. That's just who I am and what I'm going to do.

Jimmy: In what ways do you see the current generation of punks having an advantage over us and others into punk before them?

Mike: Well, they have the advantage of walking down the street with a mohawk or wearing punk clothes without getting their ass kicked, whereas I couldn't do that. I would have gotten hassled, definitely. My nephews spike their hair up. If I spiked my hair up back then I would have gotten into a lot of trouble. We paved the way, which is cool because they don't have to put up with all the shit that we had to put up with, but they kind of take advantage of it. It's like, "Well, this is what punk is now," and I know half the kids I know won't be in the scene five years from now.

Jimmy: Do you think they maybe don't cherish it as much?

Mike: Yeah. It's a fad, a phase that they're going through. A lot of my older friends are like that, too. "That was me back then. I've grown up." I guess I never grew up.

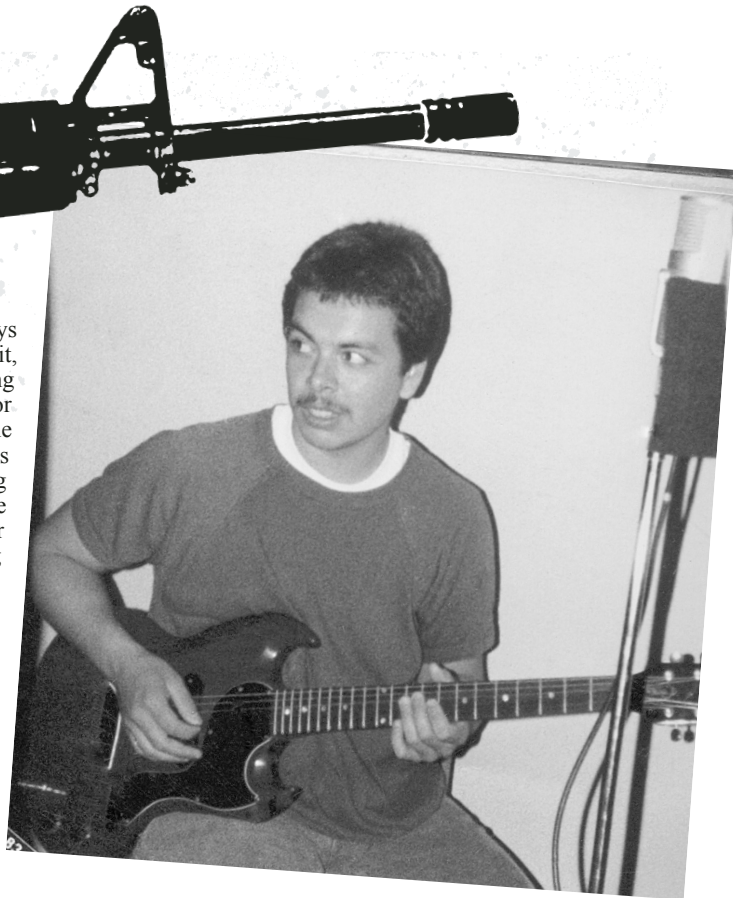
Jimmy: What ways do you see them as disadvantaged?

Mike: Probably music-wise, because there are so many bands that sound the same and so many generic bands. There was that back then, too, though.

Jimmy: I was gonna say, that sums up the '80s, too.

Mike: To me, I still say the best show I ever went to was when we played with Wasted Youth and Black Flag, because all three of us played while we were at our peak, and it was a matinee show at the Cuckoo's Nest. To me, that was my generation.

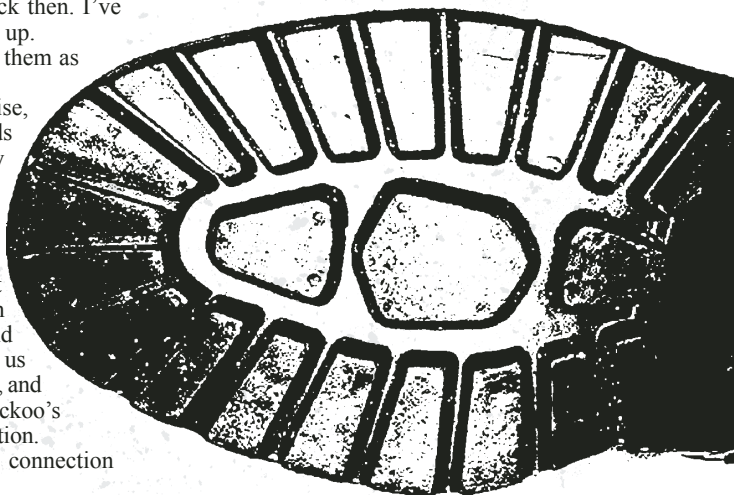
Jimmy: Do you still see that connection from that period in new bands?



Mike: Yeah. It's just that bands have gotten a lot faster now. That seems to be the constant trend over the years, to go faster and faster and faster. I thought we were really fast and now it's like we're a rock band now. These kids are playing a hundred miles per hour and screaming their heads off.

Jimmy: Do you see any particular bands now that are legitimate torchbearers of that earlier period?

Mike: There are a few. Locally, there are crusty kids. Crass stuff. Everything just evolves. Everything changes, which is for the best. You don't want everything to stay the same, but everything just evolved into what it is now. I don't really see it as, "Okay, I'll pass the torch onto you now." I can't name one band that has done that.



Jimmy: Attacking it from a different end: there are shitloads of bands. Can you name any bands that kind of “get it”?

Mike: New bands?

Jimmy: Yeah, new bands. Bands that you can sit there and say, “Okay, they get it. I can see if they existed back when I was a kid I would identify with them and we wouldn’t look at them as a fucking joke.”

Mike: Um, there are a few bands. I like Mala Sangre. They’re local guys. Good guys, good band. Their hearts are into it, and that’s the only band that I see as, “Yeah, they could have been around then and I could have connected with them.” I like them now. Thretning Verse is always really good. That’s probably another band that could have been around back then, too. They can be very outrageous at times. [laughs]

Jimmy: A lot of people from our age group—since I’m not that much younger than you—they sit around and complain and say things like, “back when punk was punk.” Do you subscribe to that?

Mike: Yeah, to a certain point. To me, it was better back then because it was new. It’s not really new to me now. There hasn’t been a band that has had an impact on me now like the first time I heard the Ramones or the Pistols. No band has done that to me since then. There have been some bands that have hit it pretty close, but nowhere near it. It was a lot better; more exciting and a lot smaller.

When the scene is smaller, it seems to be a lot more fun than a big scene, because then too many people put in their opinions and views and it changes into something else.

Jimmy: The other thing that I’ve noticed with the current group of punks is an aversion to politics and that was something that Circle One never shied away from. You had “Destroy Exxon” and all that other stuff. Do you think it’s possible to extricate politics from punk?

Mike: No. I think there will always be political songs. We recorded a new album and we do a lot of our older songs. We do a song called “Anarchy,” and in the chorus we go, “Anarchy, Anarchy, Anarchy,” and I’m just like, “You know what? Let’s not say that. We’ve been through that and people know about anarchy. Let’s move on.” Politics will always be a part of punk rock. That’s just part of being in a punk band. You’ve got to sing about politics, religion, the government, stuff like that. We’re writing newer songs that are more personal, about our experiences, namely about people that have passed on, whether it be to drugs or alcohol. We have a song about domestic violence, about people being strung out. Politics and religion will always be a part of punk rock. Fifteen-year-old kids don’t know about it. They don’t know that we sang “Destroy Exxon,” or “Anarchy,” or “Red Machine,” so they have to identify that with themselves, and I’m sure they’ll move on to something else. But there will always be those three elements with punk rock, definitely.

Jimmy: How do you take politics out of punk rock?

Mike: That’s what kind of fueled punk, too, politics. The government in the U.K. with the Pistols and the Reagan era here. When Reagan was President, every band was singing negative stuff about Reagan, and the same with the Queen in the U.K. It was all politics.

Jimmy: Why do you think it hasn’t taken off in the same way with the current administration? Because the current administration can very easily mirror the Reagan administration. There are a lot of similarities between the two.

Mike: I haven’t kept in touch with politics and I don’t want to. I was really active in the late ‘80s when I wasn’t doing the band thing. We would do

the protests, would get arrested in Arizona for crossing over a line. That was my time. After that, in the ‘90s, I was like, “You know what? Politics are not my thing anymore. I’d rather put 110% of my focus into the music, what I like to do, rather than worry about what’s going to happen in the government, because what’s going to happen is going to happen.”

Jimmy: Not really much you can do about it.

Mike: Yeah. To me, unless I see a really strong movement that is going to make a difference, then I’ll get involved in that. But I haven’t really seen that, and then I’m like, “Shoot, I’m nearing my mid-40s. I’d rather concentrate on the music, rather than having to worry about politics all the time.” I did that, and it’s cool for some people, just not for me.

Jimmy: Going back to Circle One, why don’t you talk about the *Patterns of Force* recording sessions?

Mike: We recorded that album in early ‘83 for George Newberry. It was his first record on Upstart Records. We were the first band on his label and most likely his most expensive. We recorded it. Philo from Fear was gonna produce it and engineer it, but that turned into a big argument between Danny and John. John didn’t want him, Danny did. Danny was good friends with Fear. So we ended up doing it with the in-house engineer, and it was a disaster, pretty much. We had the worst hours, from midnight to six in the morning,

and we bought a case of beer. John smoked. We recorded and mixed the album in about two weeks, and then, after we recorded it, we re-recorded it because it sounded so bad. John was, at one point, behind the controls mixing everything, and that was a disaster in itself.

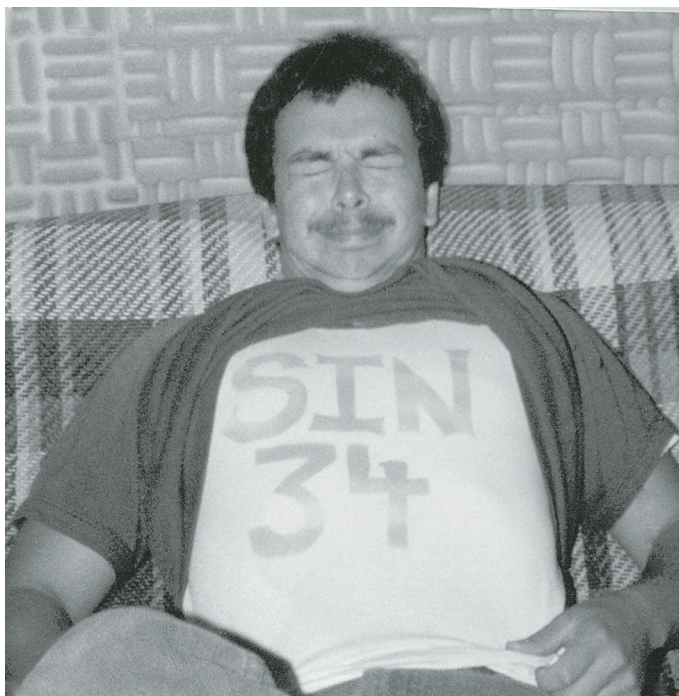
Jimmy: Was he responsible for making it sound like it was underwater?

Mike: Yes. He was responsible for that. He loved reverb and echo and he cranked it up on every fucking song, and I’m like, “Oh, man!” And that’s why we had to redo the whole thing. And we had to keep some

of it in. We were still young then and wanted to record. It was a blast, though, and a lot of fun, but it took us a long time to record it because we didn’t know what we were doing.

Jimmy: I remember you told me he put his vocals over five recording tracks. He would hit a line and go onto the next track.

Mike: Yeah, he would do that a lot, because he had to sing so fast. “I can’t sing that fast. I can only sing up to this point. And then we’ll do this on another track.” There were a lot of tracks that we kind of taped together and formed one vocal track, and I found that after I had the original masters transferred and I remixed the whole thing eight years



Mike at the recording studio for *Patterns of Force*, 1983. Photo by Danny Dorman.

**You’ve got to have humor,
otherwise you’re dead.**

ago. I just used one of his tracks on the *Are You Afraid* CD. Just one track, slight reverb, and it sounded great. That's the way it should have sounded. John had a really good sense of humor. I remember one time we were partying at Sylmar—I think it was during that album session, too—and everyone was stoned. This one guy kept bugging John for a cigarette, and John just had it. We were playing cards and he said to the guy [imitating John's voice], "All right! In fifteen minutes, I'm going to kick your ass." And every three minutes he would count down: "Fourteen minutes." And the guy was like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, right." "Eight minutes." And then it got down to two minutes and the guy was like, "Fuck, fuck!" And John said, "That's it!" And everyone started busting up.

Jimmy: Was that [recording the album] where you first got interested in recording on your own?

Mike: No. I wish I had gotten into recording then, but I didn't get into that until after John died in the early '90s. '92 or '93 was when I really got into recording.

Jimmy: What inspired your recording?

Mike: Well, I started the label, Feedback. Me and Mike Ituarte put out that 7", *Circle One Live at Devonshire Downs*.

Jimmy: Did you put anything else out?

Mike: No. That's as far as the label went.

Jimmy: Is that record still available?

Mike: It's pretty much out of print. I think I have about ten copies left. Me and Mike were gonna start a label, Feedback Records, but we only did that one thing and that was it. Then I figured, "Well, I'm still going to record bands," so I just got the studio and called it Feedback Studios.

Jimmy: And the first one was in Arcadia?

Mike: Yeah, Temple City/Arcadia. I had a few other places and that kind of buckled out. And then I figured, "Well, technology is changing way too fast. I don't want to go into computers." I hate computers. Analog was too expensive, so I said, "Fuck it," and then the store came up and I did Feedback Records (the store).

Jimmy: Why did you choose "Feedback"?

Mike: I think, originally, I just liked the name, Feedback, and "feedback" from a guitar. **Jimmy:** So it wasn't like a Circle One thing, with multiple meanings?

Mike: Well, for the store, it could be like I'm feeding back into the community. Feed back into them.

Jimmy: Do you see these all as an extension of the same thing?

Mike: Yeah, it's all an extension of the same thing. There are a lot of kids now, talking about extensions, that are into Circle One, that have never seen us before—really young kids, some of them female—so I'm thinking the last Circle One gig that I ever play, I'm going to pass the torch on to these other kids and I'm going to give them the name and they're going to continue as Circle One.

Jimmy: Playing the same songs?

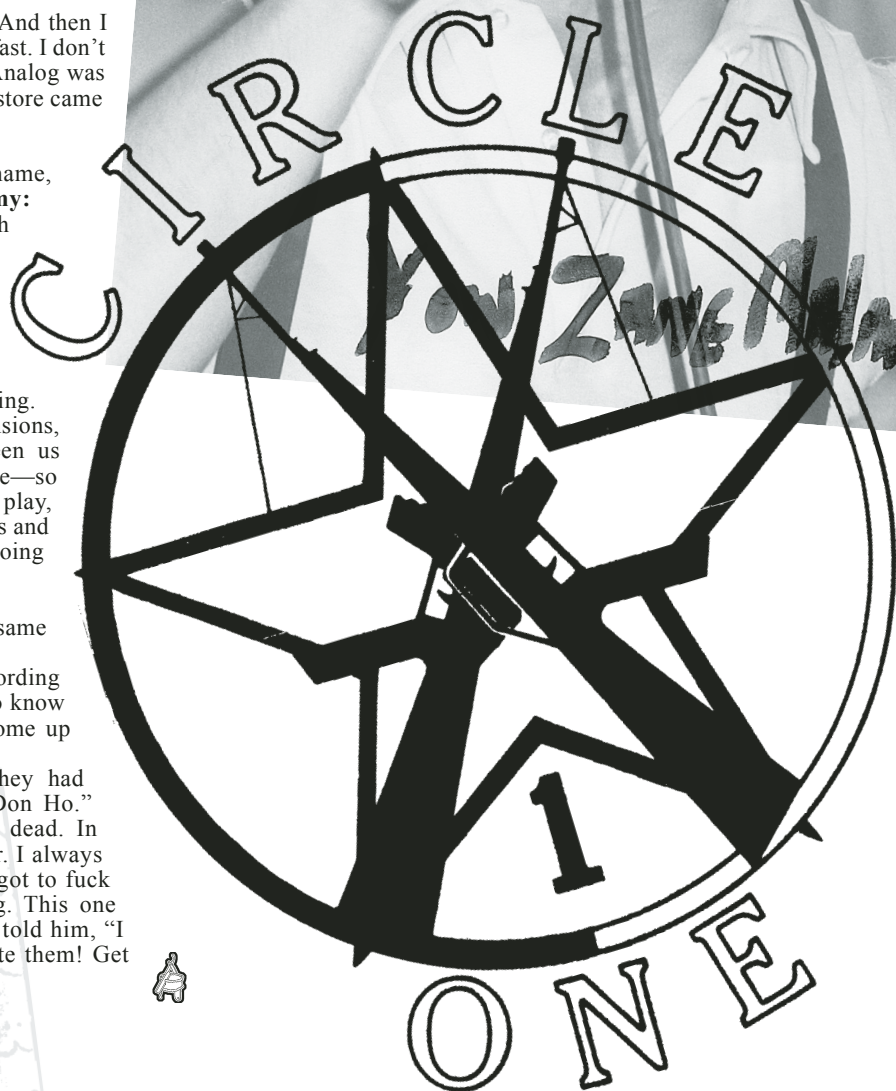
Mike: I hope not! Well, we're playing the same songs, so probably.

Jimmy: On that note, with regards to your recording bands, (Crucifix guitarist) Jake Smith wanted to know when you're recording a band, how do you come up with the funny variations on their song titles?

Mike: [laughs] Well, for Thretning Verse, they had a song called, "Gung Ho," and I called it "Don Ho." You've got to have humor, otherwise you're dead. In any kind of business you've got to have humor. I always fuck with these kids. I love them, but you've got to fuck with them. That's what makes life interesting. This one kid wanted to sell me a Green Day CD. And I told him, "I refuse to buy any product of Green Day! I hate them! Get out of here!" [laughs]

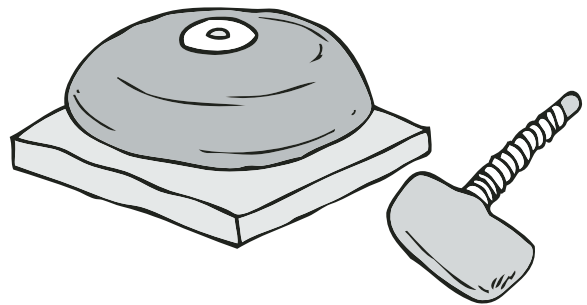
John Macias

GET WELL MIKE
OR I'll BITE YOUR
EAR OFF



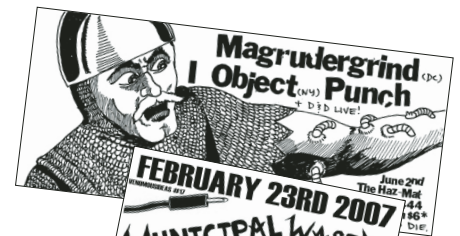
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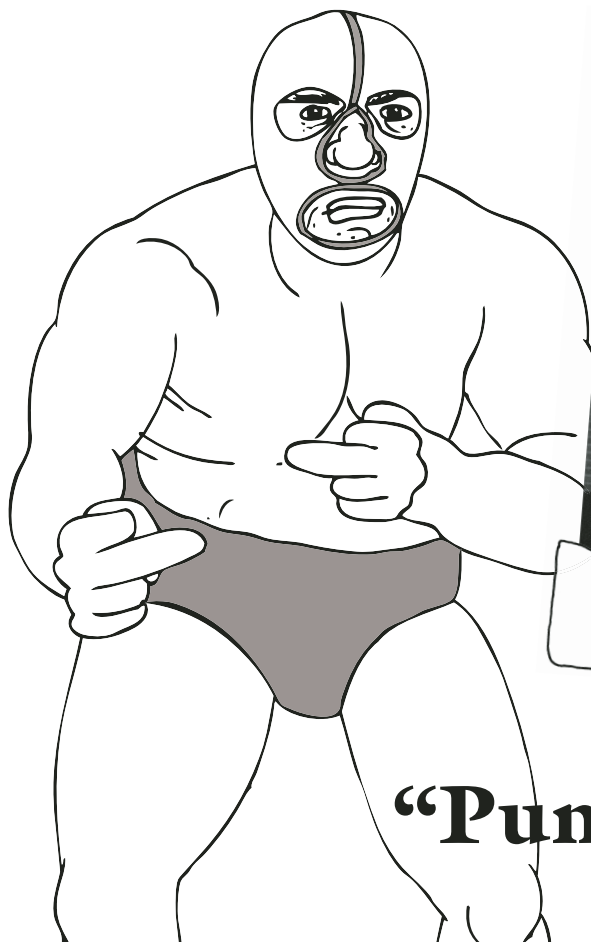
Interview by Chris Peigler
Photos courtesy of the band
graphic piledriver by Uri Garcia



As an older punk rocker who lived through the early '80s American hardcore period, I have thoroughly enjoyed the resurgence in the last few years of bands who take their musical cues from that era. As much as I love Direct Control, Government Warning, Fucked Up, and many more, I do have a favorite and it is I Object. Now, just as then, the bands who mean the most to me are the ones who hold out hope. To thrash hard, to have a maniacal drummer, or to have a Greg Ginn-worshipping guitarist is all well and good, but if I read your lyrics and think that they aren't all that different from an indie rock or metal band or from dozens of other punk bands, then you're only going to pull me so far in. If you can project a vision that is inclusive of—but also much broader than—that of the punk scene and can do it in a way that seems sincere and non-cliché, you will have my full attention. I Object does this more convincingly than any other band I am currently aware of. The feeling I get from their music and vision is the same one that I felt back in those early years. It did seem more common then, but perhaps being youthful and naïve contributed to my willingness to believe that so many others were feeling what I was at that time and for the same reasons.

I've never been a fan of punk singers who scream all their lyrics or channel the Cookie Monster all the way through. I think I Object's singer Barb gets the combination of singing, yelling, and knowing when to drop into a more normal speaking voice just about right. The raw pain in her voice combined with her everything-is-on-the-line-here sincerity reminds me of what I always heard in Joe Strummer's voice. Maybe Tim Armstrong sounds more like Joe Strummer, but Barb really makes you hurt the way Joe did at his best. I also love it when she sings about the day-to-day life of her father who worked in a factory for nearly forty years or when she sings about how our society treats you when you're "too young" as well as when you're "too old." I play their music all the time and hear new things in it constantly. I interviewed them in their van in Raleigh, NC at the start of a brief tour.





“Punk is about so much more than music”

Chris: I met your band in August of 2006 and I told one of my friends that meeting you guys made me feel good. I was wondering if that's something that you guys consciously think about when you meet new people?

Barb: I think we're just nice people. I personally am never thinking, “Oh, I better be nice to everyone because I represent my band.” It's more that I feel we're friendly, outgoing people and we go on tour to meet new people. I think that's why we end up having a lot of conversations with people we haven't met before.

Ryan: When we come to town, it's nice to know that we're not just a band that people want to see, but that people want to hang out with us. Touring is a lot of fun for us because of that. Everyone talks about how in DIY punk there shouldn't really be a barrier between band and fan. There really shouldn't be fans, just people. I see so many bands who really don't take an interest in anything but playing and selling their own merch. As a band, we're pretty interested in everything that goes along with it and because of that, it may be why people enjoy coming out to see us.

Chris: Obviously, most of the people you guys went to school with aren't playing in DIY punk bands now. What experiences shaped you to do this as opposed to taking a more mainstream path?

Biff: I grew up in a suburb of Buffalo and didn't have a lot of friends in high school and just kinda discovered punk. I used to go up to Olean where Barb and Ryan ran a space and

that left a pretty big impact. Punk just started to shape the way I did things.

Ryan: For me, it just took over my whole life in a good way. I work, and then I think about going on tour. I worked a lot for the past few months and all I could think about was being here for these five or six days. Next year we have a lot of stuff planned. This lifestyle provides so much for me that high school, a job, or a career never could. I can go out and do this and have so much fun doing it.

Barb: The way that I got involved in punk was I grew up in a small town next to Olean where Ryan is from. There was a lot of youth group stuff going on with the Free Methodist Church in my area and I was a born again Christian for a number of years. When I started going to shows, I started to think, “Wait a second. Maybe this aspect of it is not something I really believe.” I think that punk really helped me realize that I was just following the path that my friends were following and I got out of Christianity, realizing that there were a lot of aspects of it I didn't agree with. I just realized it was really cool to be a girl and to be involved in something where everyone around me was encouraging me to be more involved. Playing in bands was a way to have an outlet for life.

Steve: When I was getting into punk, there was more of a hardcore/metal/straight edge scene going on in Syracuse and I would listen to some of that stuff and then I'd discover other bands like Dead Kennedys—or even when you're young—you start listening to Nirvana or Green Day. It's a lot of peeling the

layers away and digging deeper and finding your bands. For me, as I was growing up in Syracuse, I had one scene where I was able to research things myself and get into other kinds of music. With that, you find more DIY bands and things like veganism came along with it—my own idea of straight edge and not the Vegan Reich kind of straight edge. I think that is one part that might be missing today. There's a lot of, “I'm going to go on Myspace and download a song because a band doesn't put out a demo,” or whatever. Not that downloading is a bad thing, but when people post on a message board, “What band should I listen to?” then your five friends tell you what bands to listen to instead of you actually going out and shaping your own life and discovering what you want to listen to.

Chris: [to Barb] It's interesting that you mention you were once a born again Christian because the last time I saw you guys I bought the tape at your merch table that was labeled “Barb's former pop punk band” (The tape is called *K Is for the Kids* and I highly recommend it if you see it.) and one of the songs that really leapt out at me is the one where you sing, “You are the reason kids hate God.”

Barb: I think that mentioning God at all, people automatically assume that you are a Christian, but that's not the case. You can reference certain things.

Ryan: People are really afraid to talk about it. Most of my friends, maybe not all of us, but probably 95% of my friends grew up with some kind of religion in their household

“I’ve noticed that talking about money makes people really uncomfortable”



and it was punk that gave us a different outlet. I was an altar boy for a lot of years and I went to Catholic high school. I went to Catholic grade school and I wore a tie every day. For instance, there was a girl I knew once and we were all sitting around discussing what our first words when we were children and everyone was saying “daddy” or “mommy.” This girl said, “My first word was ‘punk.’” And, we were just like, “Come on, your first word wasn’t ‘punk’...give it a rest!” Everyone found stuff in different ways. I went to a lot of crazy shows. I remember I could only go to one show a week in the early ‘90s. I remember having to choose one time. I could either go see The Toasters—and this was back when there was a big ska scene—or I could go see Napalm Death and DRI and I chose The Toasters. Most people would be like, “I saw Napalm Death and DRI,” but I didn’t.

Barb: I think people should get into things because they want to not because they’re being forced by their families. My family’s not religious at all and people used to find it very weird that I was into religion because my town was a big Catholic town. There was a Catholic university. Everyone was being forced by their parents to go to church and I was going because I wanted to and I think it’s important that if someone is into something on their own will that can be cool. You have to realize that with religion a lot of times they don’t talk about the things such as being homophobic and things of that nature that aren’t the desirable selling points for religion. I started to realize that my church wasn’t mentioning those things. They were trying to get all the kids involved by talking about positive things such as treating people fairly and so forth, but there’s so much hate that revolves around religion that is probably not something that God would have intended for it.

Chris: This is an interesting segue to my next question. This is a devil’s advocate question. Not the devil as in Satan, but...

Biff: [jokingly] This is a very spiritual interview!

Chris: I know that on your Alternative Tentacles album *Teaching Revenge* it states, “This album should not have any barcodes printed on the artwork because we are a DIY hardcore punk band.” Do you ever think about if the I Object CD did have a barcode on it and it wound up in a mall store in some podunk town in middle America and some girl, let’s say, bought it and it opened her up to a bunch of other things? Does that idea intrigue you or is it simply not worth the risk of doing business with any sort of corporate entity?

Ryan: Just to answer something real quick, the CD is available in major chain stores because there’s a barcode sticker on it. The town that we’re from, Olean, NY, which has a population of around 10,000 people, had four of them in their record store. So it is widely available.

Barb: Barcodes ruin the cover art that the artist tries so hard to make look really good. We have never been a band that wanted to partake in printing barcodes on our records. We thought that it might prevent *Teaching Revenge* from coming out on AT but the pressing plant did a sticker instead. We had done the record under the agreement that it would not be printed.

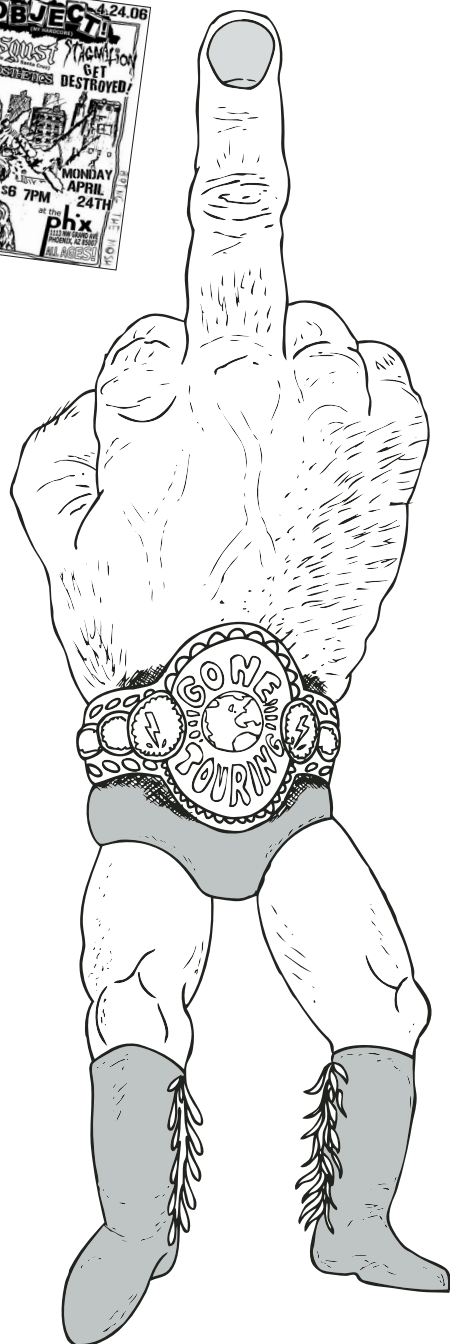
Todd: It is, instead, stickered with a barcode when required by a store or distributor.

Barb: And we were happy with that agreement. A lot of people ask us why we’re on Alternative Tentacles. A lot of people think it’s not a DIY label. We’ve met everyone involved in it. We’ve been to their headquarters. Everyone is a total stand-up person. I really enjoy working with them and I think that one positive thing about it is that they are selling our album in places that it would not have been sold before and it leads people to have the possibility to get into DIY and to read the lyrics and to think, “Oh, I should find out about this.” I think it’s really important. Obviously, like Ryan was saying, you have to learn about things you don’t know.

Chris: I know you guys have traveled a lot more than I have and maybe this is not as true in Europe, but one of the things I have seen in various DIY punk scenes is that they seem very closed and it’s like: “This is our little group.”

Ryan: We don’t want to be a part of that at all! We don’t want to be a part of the cliques in DIY punk and hardcore. As a group, we talk about our own levels and truths but I want to see bands like us and other bands take it to a huge level. I want to see five hundred people at shows that we play. I think that we could do it all on our level on our terms. One thing people seem to not realize is that DIY punk bands need money. There’s no magic bank. Everyone here talks about it all the time. We were just discussing Barb’s rent for the next tour and how are we going to do this because Barb has trouble paying rent. We have to figure that out because we want to play in this band.

Biff: That’s another thing that’s kind of a double-edged sword; everyone is so afraid to talk about money within smaller punk stuff. Everyone is so worried about people talking so much shit all the time, like, “This band had the nerve to come up and ask me for money.” Well, there were a hundred people at the show



and you put out jar and you didn't even make an attempt to see if people would contribute gas money. It's got to come from somewhere and if it doesn't come from the show, it has come out of our pockets.

Chris: I've noticed that talking about money makes people really uncomfortable.

Ryan: Especially here, but over in Europe it wasn't like that.

Barb: They're like, "How much do you need to get by to pay for your rentals, the equipment, the van, the driver, the gas?"

Ryan: They mentioned things like food, you know. We're all vegan.

Barb: There'd be food. They had bunk beds for us.

Steve: I just think they're a lot more realistic. It's like there's this fantasy world in the U.S. where everyone who acquires money or uses money is an evil capitalist and it just somehow appears and people get it and you don't ask questions and you don't say how you got it. Whereas, in Europe, they're more upfront about it and they realize there are \$150 a day expenses for a band to tour over there.

Chris: Do you think it's middle class guilt in this country with a lot of kids in the punk scene coming from financially stable families?

Steve: I don't know if I'd call it that, but I think there is a certain guilt where you're not supposed to say where you got certain things. Everyone in the punk scene thinks it's either punk to not have money or the bands don't need money and if they're asking for it, they're trying to get ahead.

Ryan: Instead of us ever signing a contract or trying to play the Warped Tour or whatever, I wanna see the DIY punk scene make something of itself. Shows like this (meaning that night's show in Raleigh) are fucking awesome! Playing in backyards, garages, by any means necessary, but I think these kind of shows should be the by-any-means-necessary shows not the, "Oh, we have a basement. Let's just do them there."

It should be places like Gilman Street and ABC No Rio. When you go and play Gilman, it's really awesome. Here's why we need more places like that. One time there was another band touring with us who had family in the city we were playing and they wanted to come to the show and they weren't punks; they were older family members and the kids throwing the show thought it was all-ages, but it turned out to not be all-ages so they said, "Well, we'll just move it to this house." But, what if not everyone feels welcome going to that house? Why not try to make it where we can do shows in venues where everyone can go and everyone can see these bands without having to go through Clear Channel or some other fucked-up corporation where we can keep the money involved.

I think everyone is settling and being complacent. "Oh, I found a hole in the backyard and I can just dig it a little bit deeper and I can fit the bands in there with at least ten people and I can put a donation bucket outside that hole and everyone is going to come in and throw a buck in there and I'll be able to get the band at least twenty bucks." And, you know that's great, I mean, we'll play shows like this forever, but we would like to see people make this known and huge and do it all on our own.

Todd: Really? Everyone is being complacent? I'm no stranger to bad tours and shit showings,



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but I don't think I've ever begrudged someone opening up their homes or a space for a show. Isn't that twenty dollars that the band didn't have before?

Barb: Not everyone is being complacent, but there are a lot of promoters who settle for the no effort route to doing a show. If all promoters went on tour to see the other aspect of it, they would realize that twenty dollars doesn't cover gas, breakdowns, and emergencies. If some kid flyers and only three kids show up, then we appreciate the effort. But if a kid doesn't make flyers and no one shows or there are a hundred kids, the door isn't watched, and the band gets twenty dollars, then that is just unacceptable. Tours cost money and bands need money. We all wish money was never an issue, but it is. Effort is the key. If an effort is made, then bands will appreciate that.

Ryan: It sucks for a band like us because we get asked to do a lot of tours and we ask, "Is it Clear Channel?" "Is it this?" "Is it that?" and they're like, "Well, yeah, this place is Clear Channel." "Well, we're not going to do it!" "Is it all ages?" "No, it's not all ages." "Well, we're not going to do it!" We turn down so many shows and people are like, "Why won't you play this?" Well, we won't. We just won't play those places. I hope to see change instead of Gilman being the only place in the United States except Syracuse, New York which has a place called Westcott for a number of years.

Chris: But in Europe there are more places like Gilman?

Ryan: Oh, yeah!

Biff: Most venues we played at were all squats and stuff.

Barb: There'll be an old church where they just go in and take it over and one room is for the shows, they have a kitchen, they have a whole upstairs for bands to sleep in.

Biff: There were a couple of places where the entire block was a squat.

Steve: But they're playing with a different deck. A lot of the stuff they pull over in Europe wouldn't fly over here. I feel like in certain circles of DIY, you play the basement and if you don't wanna play the basement there's something wrong with you. I like to play the basement, but I like to have a place that all people are welcome who want to come to the show and maybe have good distro space. We'll take what people can offer us and we're very grateful, but maybe not settling all the time and trying to achieve something more.

Biff: Depending on the show. I think if basement shows are done right, it can be awesome. It's just more of an issue of how to make some place that's usually a home be an open forum where everyone feels welcome. I live in a house that has done shows for years and it's really difficult because everyone just assumes we're these elitist punk kids. We make a very conscious effort not to be, to be like, "Hey, come to our house. We're having a show." I think it's more an issue of breaking down people's conceptions of going into a house.

Ryan: Or getting someone to pay five dollars to enter someone's house. That whole concept is just insane for someone who is outside of it. Everyone looks at it like it's Amateur Hour. But that's not the case. We're not going anywhere. We're not trying to reach some ultimate status. We're just trying to do what we do as much as we can.

Todd: What're you, specifically, doing about this? You know a problem exists. You have intimate knowledge of it. Why slough it onto someone else? When did DIY become, "Someone else should do this"?

Barb: We love the feeling of playing houses and basements because it is so comfortable and welcoming, but a lot of times it is an assumed belief that it should be more effortless and that kids coming to the show don't necessary *have* to pay to get in. It doesn't have that official show feel to some kids. We work with, respect, and support, non-house venues in our towns so that we will have them for years to come. Passing the blame onto others when your scene sucks is so common. If you don't like the local bands, start a new one. If you don't think shows are done well, do your own. It's the first step to success. In some cases though, there is only so much you can do and you have to wait for other kids to support the scene as much as you do.

Todd: Has anyone in the band tried to start a venue?

Barb: Ryan and I are from a small town. When I started to go to shows, the scene was very strong. It started to die out and we lost all our venues so we rented a storefront with two other local kids and started a community space. We did tons of shows, had a zine library, movie nights, and other events that really boosted our town. We ran it for over two years and eventually closed it down because it couldn't pay the rent. The scene everywhere comes and goes and no one was supporting the space anymore. Starting a venue is a huge commitment and it is not possible in all places. When kids start their own DIY venue, it keeps the money in the scene and it ensures shows will be all ages, which is so important.

Chris: You guys have a 4-way split that you've recorded?

Ryan: Active Minds have been around since the mid '80s and this is the first time they've recorded in eight years. They've put out tons of records. They're this two-piece, awesome band. Cyril is on it as well. They're an older band from southern California, like Rudimentary Peni, old Butthole Surfers-type stuff. Then Karnvapen Attack from Spain. Steve pushes us to do a full-length all the time. He's the one who got the full-length done the first time. Doing a full-length is pretty awesome. I can't believe I'm in a band that did a full-length record! Now we're talking about doing a second one! When I look through my record collection and I see that I have two LPs by one band, that's a lot of material.

Chris: I do like the way you explain the lyrics to your songs on the lyric sheets.

Barb: Thank you. I think that having a lyric sheet is a really important aspect of having a release. People are finding it to be less important, but, especially with punk, you can't necessarily understand what someone is yelling or screaming or singing, and even when you read lyrics, you might misinterpret the point they're trying to get at and that's why we as a band put our lyrics and song explanations. We also have contact information if people need to have it explained to them further.

Biff: Or want to discuss it.

Barb: Hearing bands talk during shows is a highlight for me when we go on tour and reading lyrics on records that I purchase is a big deal. Punk is about so much more than music.

Ryan: I always like to mention bands that I think people should check out. There's Black SS from the U.S. There's Tangled Lines from Germany, who are touring over here this winter. There's Piazza Dropout and Go. There's a lot of bands that I'm really into right now and those are a few that I don't think get enough credit.

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I *Object*

THE MEASURE {S.A.}

Interview by Matt Pullman
Layout by Uri Garcia



photo by Tim Burke

Of all of the fifty states in this country of ours, few hold such a proud group of musicians like New Jersey. There's obviously the Boss. There's also Lifetime, Sticks and Stones, The Bouncing Souls, The Ergs!; the list goes on. I think it's pretty safe to say however, that none of those bands have members that can name all twenty-one counties of the Garden State. The Measure [SA] are that band.

The Measure [SA] are a bunch of humble, Billy Bragg-obsessed-vinyl-and-musical-nerd-enthusiasts who would much rather talk about their scene and their friends' bands than discuss their own progress over the last three years. After their debut LP, Historical Fiction, the band has been on a mission filled with splits and singles, honing their craft even more, show after show. While their debut was most definitely solid, the band is a much different beast now. I believe the first true sign of this was their Union Pool 7" last year. It's the type of song that rips open your scalp and commands you to run up to the front and scream your heart out along with them.

That song was only the beginning for The Measure [SA]. Not only have the songs just continuously gotten better and better, the attitude of the band is clearly different. No longer just a project to pass the time, the band is ready to make a go of it. The compassion for their scene and their friends will never change. What is different is that people are starting to include them within the legions of great New Jersey punk bands. And hey, what other band can you think of that has a bunch of loyal stuffed beavers following them around?

Matt: So, explain how the band came together?

Mike: Fid was talking about wanting to learn how to play drums. Fid and I were talking about him playing drums for a couple acoustic songs I had written over the two years I hadn't been in a band. At the same time Lauren and I were talking about starting a band for shits and giggles. The three of us got together and started playing. We ended up playing as a three piece for...

Lauren: Six months almost. From June until November.

Mike: Yeah, almost six months.

Lauren: It was just supposed to be for the summer, while I was home from school. We were just having a good time so we decided to keep going even though I went back to Rhode Island. We played our first show in November without a bassist.

Fid: For the record, I was totally against that.

Mike: It was a terrible idea.

Lauren: We played without a bassist for one show and after that we were like, "Hell no!" Jay Hunchback (Member of Hunchback) played bass with us until we recorded our album the next March.

Mike: For a band that was only supposed to last for three months, it's been almost three years. We were also supposed to break up immediately after recording our first LP and that didn't happen either.

Matt: Why?

Mike: I was planning on moving

Matt: Where were you going to move?

Mike: Out west. That's why we ended up recording the LP as early as we did.

Lauren: Had it not been for thinking we might not be a band anymore, I think we probably would have waited a little bit longer. It was really meant to be a record of where we were at the time.

Matt: What other bands were you guys in beforehand?

Lauren: This is my first band.

Fid: Andrew was in a band called I Wish I Was Dead. He was the singer. Can you believe that?

Lauren: For the record, he's the quietest dude ever to us.

Mike: I was in two bands before The Measure. And Fid was in about, what, five to six thousand?

Lauren: Every band in this town ever.

Fid: I was in all the other bands from this town.

Matt: So what was the moment where you guys were like, "Fuck, were doing this"?

Mike: Hasn't happen yet. [Everyone laughs]

Fid: We'll call you up. [Points at Mike] I think it was when you decided not to leave, not to go out west, when we decided we would try to play. That's when Jay stopped playing with us because he thought he was basically filling in. But then, [Points at Andrew] that's when we got Sir Talks-A-Lot over here because we wanted to keep playing.

Mike: When we all heard the finished product we were really happy with it and really wanted to be playing those songs. Around six months, a year down the line, we were sick of playing those songs and we started actually getting them right live... occasionally.

Lauren: We can now play the songs like they are actually recorded.

Fid: The three of them we still play.

Matt: Since you guys are now a full band, what is like recording, now that you are committed to it full time?

Lauren: We are thinking about recording

I told them if we don't sound like Napalm Death by the end of the summer I'm quitting.



photo by Tim Burke

It's the greatest state on God's green Earth. I've said this time and time again.



a new album in the near future. Even re-recording the songs we have for the 7". I think we know the recording process a lot better for us individually and what sound we're going for and how to get it right and not spend ten million years on it. It took us a long time to record the LP. I think we've just gotten better at knowing what we're going for.

Mike: The stuff we recorded for the 7" has a lot more of a live energy than the LP ever did. The LP was such a studio process for us because we were all learning how to be in a studio. Now we can just go and play a little more comfortably than we did in the beginning.

Matt: You guys want to focus on putting out more splits, compared to doing a full-length?

Lauren: We recorded a whole bunch of songs that we haven't even really finished yet.

Fid: We could have done a second record but we decided to put a whole record together as a whole. We recorded a whole album's worth of songs just a month ago but we have a couple splits coming out. I'd prefer to release LPs but this is a good opportunity. We met a lot of really cool people we'd like to do some records with.

Lauren: We're putting out a lot of singles. After we put out what we recorded so far, we're going to start another album.

Matt: How did the splits with the Modern Machines and O Pioneers!!! come about?

Lauren: O Pioneers!!! approached us about it. After we played with them in Texas on our last tour, they called us up and asked if we wanted to do that. We were already planning on recording for a split with the Modern Machines.

Lauren: Marco from Salinas Records approached us about the Modern Machines.

Mike: The second time he's done something for us we didn't really deserve.

Lauren: O Pioneers!!! approached us about that one. I think the other songs are going to end up being singles.

Mike: The "Old Crow" single we just did because we wanted to do the song. It was a duet that Marco and Lauren wrote together.

Lauren: Sean Quinn from Los Diaper Records in Grand Rapids is putting it out for us.

Matt: A lot of people are switching back to vinyl, and in a lot of punk bands, especially. People don't seem to buy CDs anymore in this genre, so what was behind the decision to release a CD, instead of putting out more 7"s?

Lauren: That was really just Aaron from Team Science approaching us to do. We didn't go after that at all. We always thought if it happens it happens.

Mike: When we were on tour, people would ask for it. We always offered people burns. We were never going to put the foot forward to try and find somebody. If somebody is offering to do it, we're glad to have it.

Lauren: People ask for it just because they have it on vinyl and then they want to listen to it on their iPod. It's good to have. Our first priority is vinyl because we like that better.

Matt: What is the official explanation behind the [SA]?

Lauren: There's another band out in California called The Measure but they're not really in our scene at all. We just wanted to separate ourselves from that so we added SA on to mean "strictly analog," because we like records so much.

Mike: It was a running joke when we first started. We were trying to do a demo with my housemate at the time. We were basically trying to do a computer demo and Fid kept making a joke about, "I can't do this. I'm strictly analog." It basically became the first inside joke in the band.

Lauren: I don't think he had a cell phone at the time. He was more strictly analog than any of us have ever been.

Mike: Although, for the record, I think we've been sticking with "somewhat aquatic" for longer any other meaning because of the somewhat aquatic rodent that assists on percussion?

Lauren: At all of our shows, we have our family of beavers [Stuffed Gunn Beavers, the band's mascots].

Matt: Family of beavers?

Mike: Team of beavers.

Matt: Does this include Walter?

Lauren: Walter and Beavie are ours.

Matt: Why did you bring the beavers?

Lauren: They're Fid's. He brought them into the band.

Mike: There are a total of about fifteen beavers, but only two have a direct involvement with The Measure. It's contagious because I've started talking to them. [Laughs]

Lauren: The beavers are a part of the handclaps and the gang vocals in the background.

Fid: Yeah, Beavie's been all over the world; Japan, Korea, England. I've never been to those places. He travels with our friends when they go on tour. He went to Europe with my old band, but he's seen so much more of the continent than I have. People in Japan actually asked about him the last time my friends played there. That's crazy. He and I just went to Ireland, which was pretty cool, and he had been there a couple of months earlier without me. He is one amazing beaver. He literally saved my life when I was younger. True story.

Matt: Do people ever bring you beavers?

Lauren: No, because they're specific: Gunn '85.

Mike: That's not true. Katie brought Westerberg.

Lauren: They give Fid beavers, but it's not really a band thing.

Mike: We were presented a beaver during one of our shows.

Matt: Why do you think a lot of people who were in punk bands gravitate towards folk-punk? You guys started off mostly as folk-punk, but a lot of people will be in a punk band and they'll be like, "I want to start a folk punk band/side project."

Lauren: I don't think it's something we really think about anymore. I think it's something we thought about vaguely because Mike and I shared very similar music tastes so we always thought our writing styles went together because we both like that sort of music. I still write a lot of the songs we start off with on the acoustic guitar. I think it sort of happens because it's what we are influenced by. I think it's less that we're trying to fit in some punk rock mode. We're just going with what we like to listen to.

Mike: I hadn't been in band in two years and Lauren's first stabs at writing have been pretty much by herself on an acoustic guitar—all the songs we started the band with. It just naturally created a sound. Plus, for myself, as I get older, I get more interested in roots music.

Matt: What was your segue into that?

Lauren: I just wrote songs on my own and did the whole singer/songwriter deal.

Fid: Boring!

Lauren: I think we were able to separate ourselves from that music. Our songwriting process has become so collective. I don't think you can hear one style.

Fid: Big Country is my biggest influence, songwriting-wise. I wish I could write songs like that guy. They make the guitar sound like bagpipes.

Lauren: Someone came up to me at one of our shows on tour and said they thought I played guitar like a lot of the female singer/songwriters that I listened to growing up. I don't think it ever really occurred to me that's how I learned how to play.

Mike: She's talking about Ani DiFranco. [Everyone laughs]

Fid: I didn't even know we were going to talk about that.

Lauren: No. I was going to go see Dar Williams recently. That was a throw back.

Mike: For me, when I was seventeen and going through that "I'm an asshole" phase and became really distant from my dad—who was I was really close with growing up—what got us really close again, he gave me his old copy of *Blood on the Tracks*. Dylan just in general, but that record specifically. That segued me getting into a lot more folk and roots music. That and Social Distortion.

Fid: I care for Billy Bragg quite a bit.

Matt: So if you have to pick Billy Bragg or Paul Westerberg, who would you take?

Mike: In a fight?



photo by Tim Burke



photo by Carl Gunhouse



photo by Chelsea Suarez

Fid: Wasn't Bragg a pacifist?

Lauren: If I had to pick one, it would definitely have to be Billy Bragg because that's a nostalgic thing.

Mike: It really depends on whether Paul Westerberg is drunk. Are they fighting?

Matt: If you were only allowed to listen to one for the rest of your life. I know it's a difficult choice.

Fid: That's like asking which one of my two children I love more, Mike or Lauren. [Whispers] I love Andrew.

[Everyone laughs]

Matt: What does your family think of the band? Have they always been supportive of your choice of playing in a band?

Mike: My dad has always been very supportive. My mom always supported me but she never really got what I was doing the way my dad did. He'd been in a band when he was a teenager.

Lauren: I've taken music lessons since I was seven; mostly piano. My mom teaches piano, so she understands how important making music is for me and how much it makes sense in my life, though I'm sure she'd rather have me entering a concerto competition than wanting to play The Fest. I think they're both still baffled that we go on tour and always like hearing what town I'm in. They still think it's a phase, but I think the fact that we all work really hard at it makes them take it seriously and are proud of me. It always surprises me that they actually tell their friends about it. They thought my going to punk shows was a really bad thing for a really long time, but at this point I think they're finally used to it.

Andrew: I never really talk to my parents much about my bands. In high school, I was in hardcore bands and they were just kind of shocked when they saw me, since I'm a really quiet kid. They've heard The Measure

and are supportive, but my dad just really wants me to get a real job and do something with my life.

Fid: This is the only band that I've ever been in that my parents can even remotely stand. They like my sister's band, the New Dress, quite a bit. But she's always been more successful than I have in everything that she does.

Matt: How has your upbringing and past influence the make up of the band's sound and decision-making process?

Mike: I'm sure Fid, at least, will say the same thing. Our parents were of a generation where good music, sincere music, and pop music weren't incongruous. I grew up listening to great pop and rock'n'roll records.

Lauren: I've always tried to be pretty politically aware and grew up having some pretty specific political preferences that definitely show themselves in the lyrics I

I think the last tour proved that no matter how big the country is or how far we go,



photo by Tim Burke

write. A number of our songs could be either love or protest songs, depending on how you look at them. Maybe that's just an obvious Billy Bragg influence but I also really love this song "Ojala" by Silvio Rodriguez that I heard when I was first getting into Latin American history and current events. I think that really had an impact on how I look at songwriting. A number of his songs are like this; you think they're about an ex-lover or something and they're actually protest songs about politicians. I don't consider myself a protest singer by any means, but sometimes, I forget how the other interests in my life end up showing up in the band.

Matt: There are a lot of bands out there from New Jersey, and they kind of champion the state as an influence on their sound. So what do you think New Jersey does for your sound?

Fid: The perfect example would be Dramarama. Classic New Jersey songwriting.

probably the best part about touring for me. It forces me to drop my defenses and re-learn how to be social. I am kind of embarrassed because when people come to Jersey all we know how to do is get them drunk. Which I'm sure everyone appreciates.

Fid: Also, I came name all twenty-one counties.

Matt: You can name every single county?!

Fid: The one I always forget is Salem: all the way in the Southwest corner of Jersey.

Mike: All the North Central counties I can do.

Fid: Texas has like two hundred counties. Did you know that?

Matt: You said before that the last tour showed the band that the world isn't such a small place. Can you name a person or an event that really stands out in your mind?

Andrew: Jumping off of huge sand piles and hanging out by the train tracks in Arkansas, even though we didn't even get to a play a show there.

Fid: I think the last tour proved that no matter how big the country is or how far we go, we exist among a group of people that will always look out and take care of us. People that I'd never met in states that I've never been too, setting us up with shows and making us food. Then the next day, seeing friends for the first time in four years and picking up where we left off like it was a week ago. Seeing my family in South Carolina, swimming in the Gulf in St. Pete's with Anthony, and walking the train tracks in Arkansas were particular highlights for me.

Matt: Does it push you harder to do something different when a band from Arkansas comes to New Jersey?

Fid: Now we get them *really* drunk.

Lauren: We don't live somewhere where you can drive ten minutes and you can be in the middle of the woods. That's not what our situation is. It's a little harder to show people

we exist among a group of people that will always look out and take care of us.

Mike: I'd say having to hold shop with the Ergs! every weekend forces us to try passable songs. Just to keep up.

Fid: It really does raise the bar having friends in really good bands. Luckily for us, we don't know how to ape anyone's sound so it's not that we would want to sound like them, we just want to not suck. New Jersey is the best of both words. It's the height of suburbia, yet so close to awful, and awesome, cities. You get the full spectrum. You go to South Jersey and you're in farmland. It really is a microcosm of the universe. It's the greatest state on God's green Earth. I've said this time and time again.

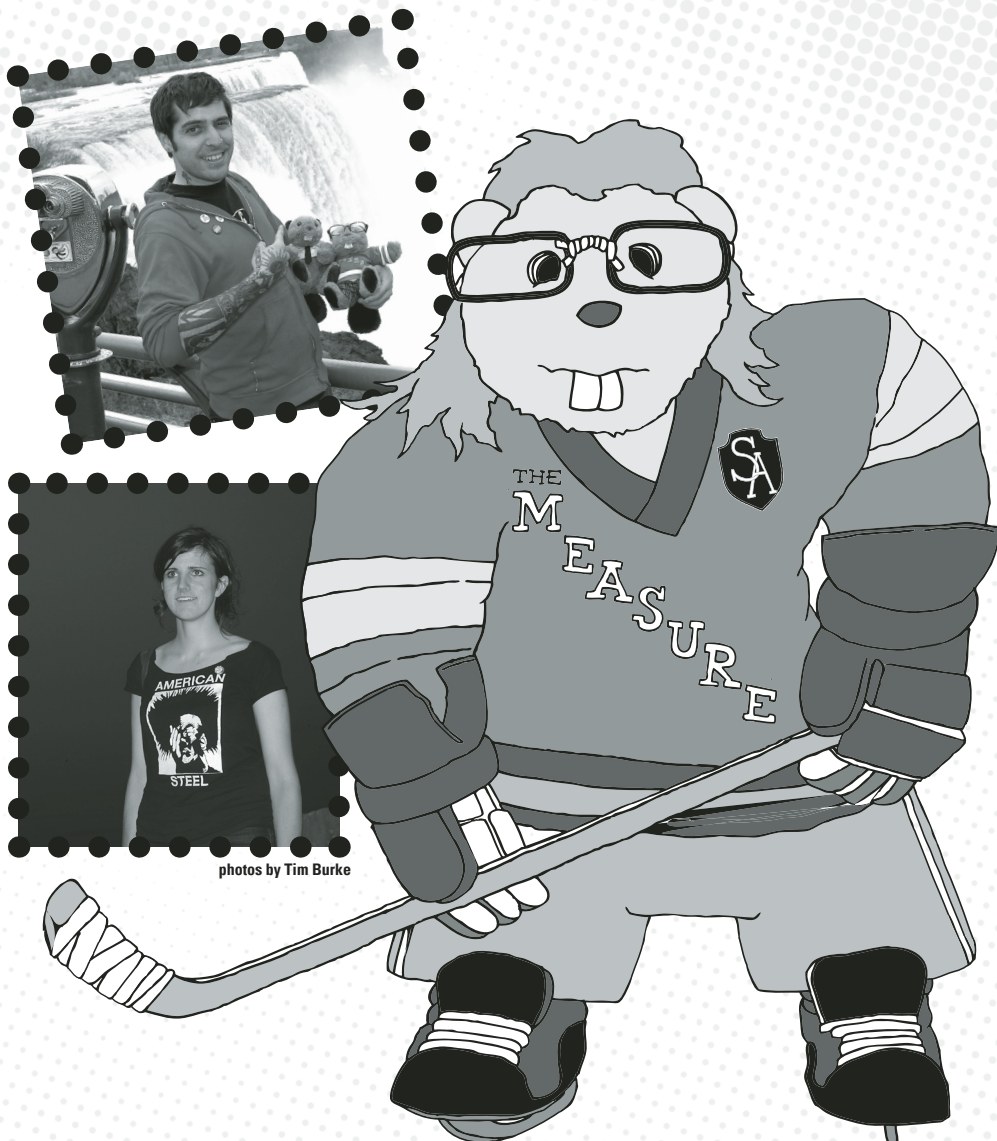
Mike: It's the birthplace of civilization.

Fid: We decided this the other day because of Thomas Alva Edison. He harnessed electricity. The whole world is based on this.

Mike: All you people listening to records, reading this under electric light, have to thank New Jersey.

Fid: Or at least Central Jersey. The Edison area. Menlo Park. I was very Jersey-centric before we traveled around. Everyone is really into making sure everyone is comfortable and making sure everyone is having a good time. We're running into like-minded people wherever we go. I was really psyched this past tour we went on. We met a lot of cool people. I had never been in Alabama.

Mike: We never really met anybody who had a passion for the places they live. To the point of the fact, these guys took us on these crazy little tours in their little corner of the world and showed us this amazing time. Right now I'm sitting next to a dude who we met at last night's show and who just jumped on to ride around with us for a few days. That's



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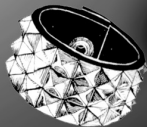
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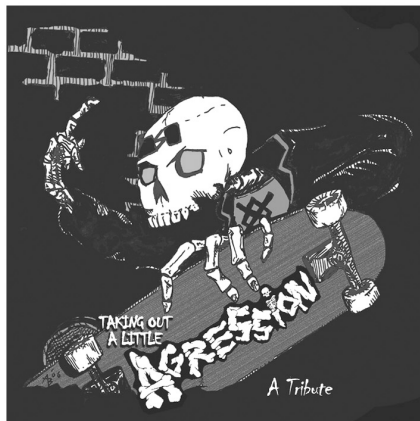
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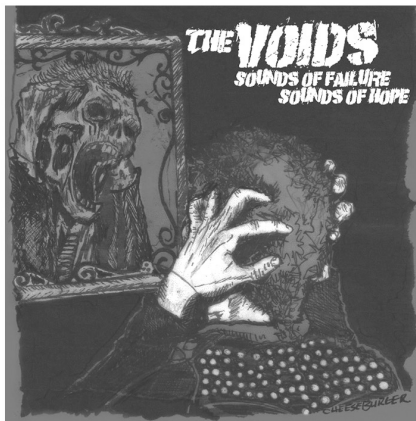
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Although, for the record, I think we've been sticking with "somewhat aquatic" for longer any other meaning because of the somewhat aquatic rodent that assists on percussion

a little more than just the suburbia.

Mike: As it gets warmer, I think we'd like to break out of New Brunswick a little bit. The beautiful Jersey shore is only a half an hour away.

Fid: That is true. Shore Points. Exit 9.

Matt: Is there a certain direction you want to take the band in, or is it just doing whatever comes about?

Fid: I told them if we don't sound like Napalm Death by the end of the summer I'm quitting.

Mike: We don't have a deliberate idea of where we want to go. Collaboratively, there is kind of this subconscious direction that all four heads meet in the middle ground and move towards.

Lauren: I think that's what makes me really excited about recording another album. I think you'll be able to see that the first LP, at least to me, totally sounds like us at the time. Then, whenever we get around to recording another album, it'll sound like us, but it will not be like the first one at all.

Fid: No way. The difference between the first record and the single we put out this past fall (*Union Pool*) is totally different. It sounds like much more of a live band. We were actually kind of excited to make our songs sound good when we made the LP. We played around with a lot of guitar sounds and added different effects. I think we're just a lot more confident and being able to play our instruments helps quite a bit, I found.

Matt: Is there a personal story behind the song "It's Me or the Marlboro Man?"

Lauren: It's about a bunch of different people I know who have their own vices I don't really agree with. It's about taking care of yourself because there are other people out there who care about you. I've seen a lot of people and known a lot of people who do things they know aren't good for them. It's just about me wanting my friends around for a long time.

Matt: What does this band mean to you?

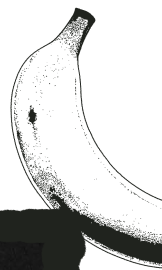
Andrew: It's something to strive for. It makes work a little more okay because I get to go on

tour in a few months. It's also provided a little certainty at some points when everything else in my life was up in the air.

Lauren: It's really just cathartic. Touring goes beyond meeting new people or seeing new places. It definitely means a lot to know you might be bringing something new to wherever you're playing. Like having kids come up to us and say they had a good time or haven't seen a band that sounds like we do. I've gotten comments about not seeing a female guitarist or singer very often, so that always makes me feel really good. That keeps me going sometimes, knowing that I'm playing shows for younger girls who may not have thought about actually being in a band. I know I never really considered it until I was much older.

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THE COPYRIGHTS

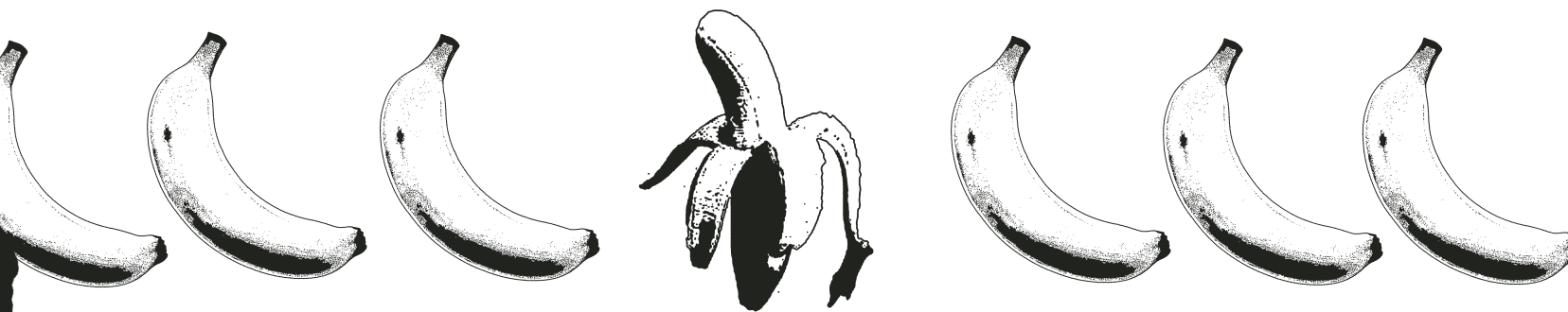


When I first heard The Copyrights, I wanted to hoard them for myself and not share them with anyone, almost the same exact reaction I had when hearing Off With Their Heads or Toys That Kill for the first time. But alas, what good would that do the world? Nothing. So, instead, I decided to play nicely and share these favorites with the world.

The Copyrights play pop punk (which, yes, has gotten a bad rap since the mid-'90s), but I'd say they have more in common with the punk rock-and-roll craziness of Randy (the Swedish band) than the more "traditional" sounds of pop punk, like The Queers, The Ramones, or any of the like. But unlike other pop punk bands, The Copyrights borrow from their long list of influences and use them as tools instead of just copying shit they dig. None of their albums sounds the same, but they still have that signature sounds that you recognize whenever you hear any of their recordings.

The point of all this nonsensical name-dropping mumbo jumbo? Maybe I'm just excited to get the scoop on one of my no-longer-hidden finds with conversations about growing up, pop punk, hotdog go-go dancers, and strippers with BLTs.

Interview by Mr. Z - Photos courtesy of Tobias Jeg - Layout by D. Disorder



The Copyrights: Brett: Guitar, Vocals - Adam: Vocals, Bass - Luke: Drums - Jeff Guitar, Vocals

Brett: To me, the new record is back to a more positive outlook overall and probably will sound different because this is the first record we didn't record ourselves with Luke as the engineer. We recorded with Matt Allison at Atlas studios in Chicago. It was good to have an outside perspective on the songs and how they should sound.

Jeff: If there's a theme, I think it would be that life has ups and downs but it's always going to get worse and then you die. But, as weird as it sounds, we're incredibly positive about it. We all fuck up and have to react to things we don't plan on. But, instead of being stagnant and wasting time, we'd rather focus on what's next and have a fucking blast every step of the way, even if what's next is most likely another letdown.

Adam: I think the new record has a good

Lawrence Arms have, but I think both those bands sort of take the Midwestern pop punk thing and evolve it and add their own twist. I'm sure it's hard for me to not be influenced by D4 since they're pretty much my favorite band, but I wouldn't ever say that I could write anything as good as *Midwestern Songs*.

Jeff: Being that the early songs—and the new ones for that matter—follow the three chord, catchy hook, verse chorus verse pattern, it's pretty easy to lump the band in with Screeching Weasel, The Queers, and the rest of the gang. But thanks to our sloppy musicianship, more complexity in lyrical content, the use of open chords, feedback and noise, the music now has much more of a dingy Midwestern gnash than The Arms, Jawbreaker, and D4 have done for years. But the main focus is still on the layered melodies and energy.

Mr. Z: Best album from a Mid-western band in 2006?

Jeff: Lawrence Arms, *Oh, Calcutta*. Duh.

Brett: Lawrence Arms *Oh Calcutta*. Hands down.

Luke: Is Denton, Texas the Midwest? If not, I would say Lawrence Arms *Oh Calcutta*. We saw them do a lot of those songs live before the record came out, and we looked at each other and said, "These songs are fucking amazing."

Adam: Tough one there... I like *21st Century Power Pop Riot* by The Methadones, not just cause I'm on it, but I think it turned out great... 2006 was a long year, so I'm sure I'm forgetting a bunch of stuff. I think the Off With Their Heads *Hospitals* record is great. I also think the Ohio scene had some good stuff: the Merkurs, Delay, and Tin Armour.

Maybe our standards of good and bad are so low that anything above eating shit is pretty good.

batch of songs that are more focused on our home town. *Mutiny Pop* might be a little more aimed at the "scene," but I think *Make Sound* is aimed more towards ourselves, and the things happening with all of us growing up and moving on. Where we're actually "moving on" to beats the hell outta me, but...

Luke: Well, *We Didn't Come Here to Die* was pretty Ramones-y on purpose. It was sort of a reaction to the way the underground scene locally and nationally was heading: less energy, more complexity, less heart, more "chops," less reality, more false emotion. It was a much more positive record than *Mutiny Pop*. We still had sort of the same themes on *Mutiny Pop*, but that record was more cohesive and more critical. This was probably due to the fact that we were at that age where the real world was starting to hit all of us, and sort of asks how we should deal with it. You know, the old *Catcher in the Rye* quagmire.

Mr. Z: Toby of Red Scare says that your earlier recordings are "reminiscent of Screeching Weasel" but that your "sound has since been evolving towards bands like Dillinger Four or The Lawrence Arms." What are your thoughts on this?

Luke: I think this is somewhat accurate. I mean, we don't have the chops that Dillinger Four or

Brett: I don't really think we sound like or are as good as either band. Screeching Weasel is still a big influence, as well as lots of other kinds of music. Luke—who writes most of our songs—listens to a lot of folk stuff lately, and Adam—who writes some songs—listens to a lot of weird power pop stuff, and I write songs that are mostly influenced by the stuff Luke writes.

Adam: What the hell does Toby know about us anyway? That man is a drunk! Give him a year, and he'll end up snorting all the label money up his nose!

Mr. Z: What album got the most rotation for each of you in 2006?

Brett: Probably Bent Outta Shape, *Stray Dog Town*.

Adam: Uhm, *Drop Out With* by The Barracudas, *Fix My Brain* by the Marked Men, the Trojan Dub Box set, Groovie Ghoulies *Go Stories*... I could go on and on...

Luke: I would say The Marked Men *Fix My Brain*. Another great twist on pop punk.

Jeff: I got a totally sweet Melvins mix tape from my friend Tim. I think I listened to it exclusively for about four or five straight months. I even totaled my truck to it. The previous six months I listened to the official album of Texas, Jerry Jeff Walkers' *Viva Terlingua*.

Mr. Z: What albums are guilty pleasures right now?

Brett: The Lawrence Arms always become a guilty pleasure, and whenever Off With Their Heads comes to town.

Adam: King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown, and the Black Uhuru greatest hits CD. I'm fucking balls deep in dub land over here these days.

Jeff: I don't have a guilty pleasure album right now. But sadly, at work I do like hearing Audioslave, Buckcherry, and System of a Down on the local new metal radio station.

Luke: I don't know how guilty it is, but the newest Hank III record *Straight to Hell* gets a lot of play by me. Also, wussy shit like Wilco *Being There*, Whiskeytown *Faithless Street*, and Ryan Adams *Jacksonville City Nights*.

Mr. Z: How in the hell are you guys so good at creating amazing pop punk material without one ounce of whine?

Luke: That's an awesome compliment. I think we try to make a conscious effort to not whine. I think most of the best music ever is whine-free, and most sentiments can be expressed better in a different way.

Jeff: I've never understood why people continually whine. Maybe our standards of good and bad are so low that anything above eating shit is pretty good. Whining doesn't



It's always going to get worse and then you die.

change anything and nobody's any better off after you do it. I think it's better to put your energy into taking care of business and dealing with it. Crying about shit is just a waste of time and life. Anyway, Michael Jordan doesn't whine and that dude is like a six-time champion of the world.

Mr. Z: Adam, how were you invited to be guest backing vocalist on the Methadones *21st Century Power Pop Riot* covers album?

Brett: Don't let him fool you. Adam's road to the top is paved with the slobber from one million blowjobs.

Adam: Me and Dan are good friends. We're both big power pop fans, so doing the vocals on those songs were easy 'cause I already knew them all. I guess you could say I knew them like the back of my hand! [laughs] Eh.

Mr. Z: [laughs] Good reference to one of the best songs from that album! Love that tune. Tell me everything you know about Stinky's Peepshow in San Francisco and the consumption of bacon that the stripper was throwing at people. Who did the eating and why did the parties in question think it was such a great idea at the time?

Adam: It was a combo of Brett's birthday, unlimited free drinks, Adderall, maybe Xanax, and weed in there, too, for some of us. Look, when you're on tour and you're broke and starving and someone offers to buy you a BLT you take 'em up on it. Even if it means eating it out of a girl's crotch okay?

Brett: That was a great night! It was my twenty-fifth birthday and we played this thing called Stinky's Peepshow in San Francisco where they have "large and lovely" go-go dancers on the bar and pool tables, and do a "peep show" in the back room that costs a dollar. Toby from Red Scare paid for us all to check out the peep show; we had no idea what to expect. We walked in and sat down with about twenty people and the next thing we knew this lady hits play on a boom box, opens a door, and a dude in a hotdog costume comes out! What the fuck!? Next comes a girl in a bikini with bacon stapled all over it! The bikini girl and the hot dog man danced around for a bit and then some people paid to eat bacon off of her body. Then hot dog man pulled up this flap on his crotch and whipped out some more bacon for the bikini girl to make a BLT out of. She asked who wanted to eat it and Funburg—Jeff—of course, raised his hand like a little kid in kindergarten. He ate every last bit. Best birthday ever.

Jeff: Every show at Stinky's is themed differently and, on this occasion, the peepshows' theme was bacon. When the attractive half-naked woman with a couple dozen strips of bacon secured to her person taunted the crowd requesting mere dollars to pluck the bacon by mouth off of her body... obviously I had to do it. The woman sauntered over with a BLT sandwich in hand then straddled my seat, each foot standing on the seat to my left and right. Next, she stuffed the sandwich into her crotch and roared, "Eat this BLT you fucking PUSSY!" and then slammed my face with nosebleed force into her groin. I believe it was one of the defining moments of my life and the



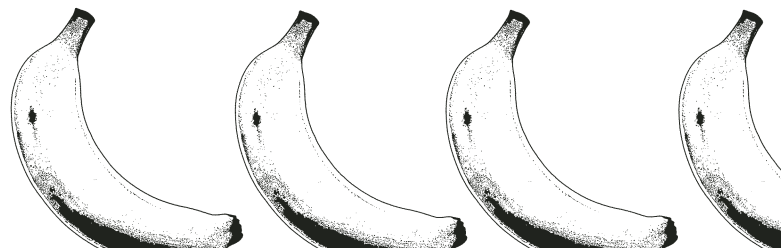
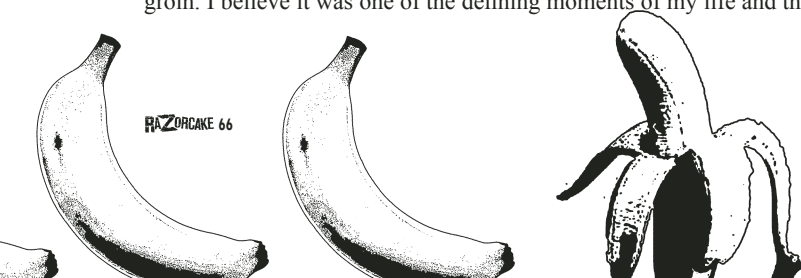
BLT was delicious. Just last night I had one for the first time since then and it wasn't nearly as good.

Mr. Z: What are each of your day jobs and how easy or hard is it to take time off to tour?

Brett: For the past four years I've worked at a little pizza joint and they were really cool about letting me leave whenever I wanted, for however long I wanted, which is awesome. Though it's kind of hard to watch everyone your age moving on to more "adult" careers and shit while you're still working your shit job. Kind of. Not really. I guess it's harder to watch my friends who work even less than me so they can have time to do way cooler shit than just being in a band. Recently, the restaurant was sold to new owners who sucked, so I quit. They let me have time off to record this new record and on our last night of recording we watched *Office Space*, so I just quit going to the job when we got home. That's the second job that I stopped going to because of that movie. Now I work at a cool screen-printing shop, and they're also nice about time off.

Adam: I work on vintage guitars. My boss is a close friend of mine, and he gives me 100% support in doing the band thing. So time off for me is not an issue at all.

Jeff: I'm in home remodeling and new construction. Luckily, my boss is almost as much of a fuckup as I am. So, if I give him at least a day or twos notice everything is cool.



But, as weird as it sounds, we're incredibly positive about it.



Luke: I'm in my third and final year of law school at SIU in Carbondale, home of the Fighting Salukis. I also work at the Jackson County State's Attorney's office. It's pretty tough for me to get away and tour any more. I think the guys are pretty cool with it, and Devin from The Vents is my fill-in when I can't go on tour.

Mr. Z: Insubordination started out as a small, independent pop punk label doing things out of their bedroom, but has since gotten a new web facelift and has changed the way they do business by promoting the hell out of their bands and releases. Did you ever think that they would one day help your music catapult to background music on MTV or Tony Hawk video games when you first decided to do a 7" with them?

Brett: We never did a 7" with them. The first thing they put out was our first full-length. And from the beginning, Pat and Chris were always really gung-ho about the label and promotion and stuff. I'm glad they took a chance and put up so much money and time for us, even though at the time we weren't really a touring band or had any following or experience at all. Hell, I didn't even own a guitar or an amp when I first met Pat. I would just borrow stuff. I remember the look on his face when I told him that. In fact, I didn't own an amp until I bought one from Chris. And he still put out our shit! What a dumbass! But seriously, though, we owe them a lot.

Adam: We were on a Tony Hawk game? No one told me! We were one of the first bands to do a full-length with them when they started getting the ball rolling on being a serious label. So we've both learned how this whole music business thing works together.

Luke: Insobordination is an awesome label. Pat, Chris, and Enoch always treated us well when we come through Baltimore. We appreciate everything they've done for us, and we appreciate all the great records they have put out in the past five or so years: Big in Japan, Plus Ones, the new Apers album, Even In Blackouts; a lot of great stuff.

Mr. Z: Oh, the 7" was on It's Alive? Makes sense, but Insobordination distros it, right? As far as Tony hawk goes, that's what it said in the Insobordination "Downloadable Copyrights Press Package!" [laughs] How did you hook up with It's Alive Records?

Brett: The miracle of internet message boards, I believe. I could be wrong. All I know is that Adam and Jenna are great people who put out great stuff!

Luke: We played at a scary bar in Hemet, California, on the wildly successful Girl Crazy tour of 2003. Of the four people there, two of them were Adam and Jenna. They liked us, and Adam kept in touch from there. After the *Button Smasher 7"*, we were hooked. That was the coolest piece of merch we had ever put out, and it was a great idea for 7", to include the CD and a bunch of extra shit in each record. Plus, Adam's artwork is always amazing. We look forward to putting out whatever Adam and Jenna want us to on It's Alive.

Adam: Adam asked if we would want to do a 7" and we said yeah, 'cause you know vinyl gives you instant "street cred." Neither one of us thought it would be as successful as it was. Everyone was like, "Go ahead and waste your money pressing those old things." Sure enough, they sold out really fucking fast. Then we released two more 7"s with them, and they just released *Mutiny Pop* on 12", which turned out fantastic.

Mr. Z: What prompted the move to Red Scare?

Jeff: Fame and fortune.

Brett: The real story: Chris and Pat from Insobordination talk way too much about bowel movements and it kind of freaked us out so we told them to fuck off.

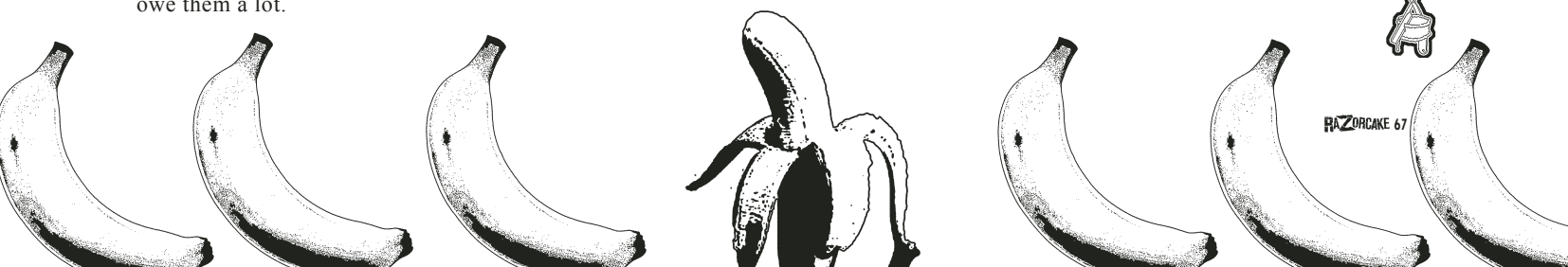
Luke: Red Scare puts out a lot of amazing records. They have really good distribution, and Toby seems like a really cool guy who seems to like us a lot. We put out two records with Insub, and I'm sure we will work with them in the future, but I guess we just wanted to try something new and spread it out a little, you know?

Mr. Z: Every time your song "Meathead" comes on in the car my almost three-year-old daughter sings along to the "I know, I know" parts—in fact, she can't get any more excited about the fake-out ending, either—and immediately after, she almost always instructs me to change the CD and "put on the 'Hey ho, let's go' song!" Every time. Why do you guys think this is?

Jeff: Since the song was written demographically for females between the ages of two to four, this reaction really comes as no surprise.

Brett: That's awesome! What's even funnier is that song was originally called "Pothead" and played by a band Luke was in that had songs such as "Fuck the Ozone" and other offensive gems. We'll send you an old tape of theirs so she can sing along.

Luke: Probably because your almost-three-year-old daughter has impeccable taste, and she has found the only song that an almost-three-year-old is intellectually superior to. See, even she is like, "That song is dumb. Put on something smarter, like 'Blitzkrieg Bop'."



THE PENETRATORS

Nothing beats that feeling. The band has always been there. You know the name, maybe a little bit about them. Maybe you had even heard a song or two at some point. Then you finally pick up a record and thirty seconds into a song called "Rock N Roll Face," you've got a new favorite song of all time; pretty high up on the list anyway.

This is what happened to me when I picked up the *Basement Anthology 1976-1984* album by the Penetrators. I had heard a song on a Killed By Death LP that a friend had and liked it. But there are so many bands on those things and most of them are good. Well, the one song on the compilation is good, anyway. Who can track all those bands down?

And, yeah, I had plans to pick up the Italian reissues on the Rave Up label someday. But again, so many early punk reissues, who knows where to start? How much live dreck are ya gonna have to plow through to get to the good stuff? So, when I found a copy of *Basement Anthology*, I snapped it up.

I was immediately floored and by the time I got to "Rock N Roll Face," I was in love. I was so happy to be so purely excited and enthusiastic about a band, which is very rare, indeed, at this point. I even got a "Fred Records Rocks" T-shirt made up, just like the one Jack Penetrator is wearing in those old photos.

Since then, I have picked up everything else I could get my hands on. It all rules! The pure rock, ass-kicking of the Penetrators never ceases to blow me away. Watch for a new LP in the near future.

This band is a national treasure.

Interview by Mike Frame
Photos courtesy of the band

Mike: Did you grow up in Syracuse?

Jack: Elliott (Spike) and I both grew up in upstate New York, in Syracuse, actually in a suburb called DeWitt.

Mike: What was some of the first music you remember hearing as a kid?

Jack: Well for me, 1964, the Beatles initially. I thought that was the big thing. Then not long after, I heard the Rolling Stones and I said "No, that's the big thing." [laughs] Elliott and I were listening to a lot of the same stuff. I met Elliott in 1968, in music class, ironically enough, in middle school. He brought in the Rolling Stones *Beggars Banquet* and I said, "Oh my god. That's the new Stones album," and that was it. Elliott always liked Zappa a lot, too, so we kinda went down that road a little bit.

Mike: Do you feel like you were lucky to grow up in that era, with all of that stuff coming out?

Jack: Oh, god, yes. I like music that has melody, that has good chord changes, and then I like it delivered in a very authentic, energetic way. It's not so much that I am in love with the bands from that era or whatever, but that general presumption right there is driving the Penetrators more than trends or fashions or all these things that come and go. There are a lot of catchy melodies in all those Penetrators songs and we've always done our best to kick them out in an energetic way. That ('60s) music lives on. I don't know if I will be right or wrong, but a lot of music today; I question its long-term popularity. I don't like music and things that are driven by trends and fashion. We kind of hopped on the new wave/punk bandwagon there in the late '70s, guilty as charged. [laughs] We lived it and we breathed it. But you can hear a lot of '60s in what we did. We stuck with the melodies. I haven't jumped on too many trends since then, I'll tell you that.

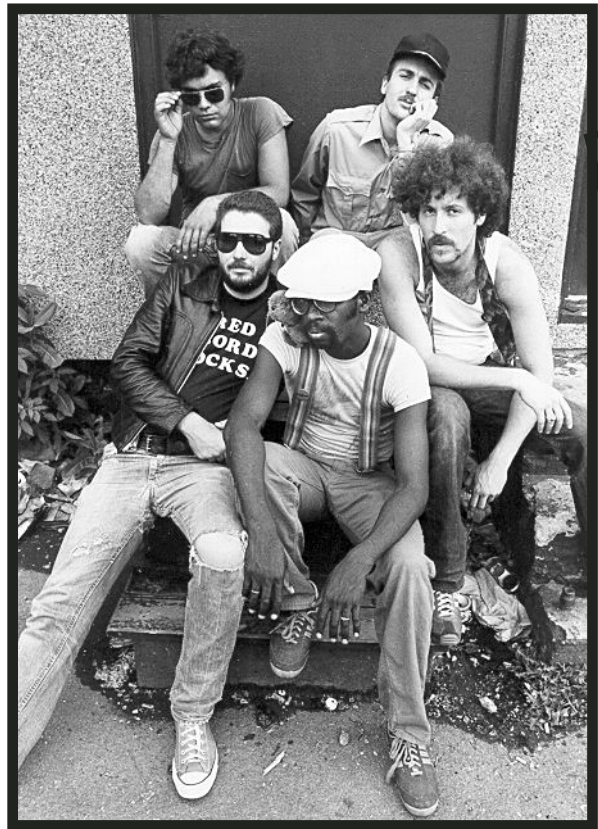
Mike: What were some of the first rumblings you got as far as the punk thing starting to happen?

Jack: In high school, Elliott and I would always go up to the Syracuse University campus on the weekends. I remember like it was yesterday, buying the first Ramones album. I remember buying the early Patti Smith albums, Sex Pistols; I remember that in a punk context. Honestly, preceding that, bands like the Dictators, New York Dolls; that laid the groundwork. Iggy... where would we be without Iggy? [laughs]

Mike: How much of an effect did the glam stuff have on you?

Jack: A big effect. Glam was the thing that immediately preceded all of this. Alice Cooper, Kiss, The Dolls: all very important stuff. You know, that stuff very quickly became uncool the second the punk thing took over. [laughs] But I always loved it. We had a local band that was very influential in the Syracuse area. They were called Jukin Bones. They were on RCA Records. Jukin Bones were big pioneers of glam rock and it's unfortunate that that band came so close to doing it all there. But I think of them when I think of glam. They were ahead of their time.

RAZORCAKE 68



Mike: Were you able to see bands like the Dictators and the Ramones in Syracuse?

Jack: Definitely, I saw Ramones a bunch of times. I saw Lou Reed on the "Rock'n'roll Animal" tour; that really blew me away. I got to be on local Boston television a couple of years ago just talking about seeing Lou Reed on that tour. That was pretty weird. [laughs] I remember seeing Slade. What a show. I would go and see whatever came through central New York.

Mike: Had you all been playing in bands for a while before the Penetrators?

Jack: Elliott and I started playing in bands in the early '70s, some of the

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names of which were Big Cheese and the Goomers, Lloyd and His Groovy Guys, Smokin' Floyd, The Fred Rap Experience. Fred would go on to be the first president of Fred Records. All that stuff was pre-Penetrators. Elliott and I were always on a very similar wavelength, going way back. We played mostly parties. Some parties we were better received than others. It was really with the Penetrators that we started to get in to the clubs. Even that was facilitated by the punk/new wave thing. That enabled us to get into a lot of clubs and I suspect if that had never happened—we weren't playing the Top 40, okay? It was thanks to embracing the new wave scene that we got into a lot of places, to be honest with you. Cover bands were the big deal. That's where the money was in its own little way back then. That is what everyone catered to. The music was awfully good, looking back then, but at the time, we thought it was the end of the world. We wanted to do original stuff.

Mike: So, you were not into what was happening in the music industry at the time?

Jack: Somewhere around 1970 or 1971, things gradually began to go sour, in the bigger picture. There still were some cool things going on. There were bands starting that I liked a lot. To this day I still like Jethro Tull. But, by and large, a lot of music was going south. Music always meant so much to me and I couldn't believe my eyes and ears. I took it very hard. It was very disillusioning and, thank

god, punk came along there. The disco period was just horrible. That was the first time I realized that big money and big business had such influence over the masses, that the big business guys in the sky could dictate to the whole country how it was gonna be for the next couple of years, and that people would buy into it without using their brains. It was disappointing and it was scary.

Mike: Did you have a pretty happening scene in Syracuse or was it something that the locals did not take to at all?

Jack: Syracuse, I think, was one of the hotbeds of the entire country for punk and new wave. It was very well established. It was a very vibrant, large scene. At the heart of that scene was a band called the Flashcubes. They inspired a lot of music coming out of that area. The Penetrators were influential. One local paper summed it up well back then. They said, "The 'Cubes started the scene, but when the Penetrators play out, it is really a party, it's really something special. You gotta get out and see them." Both bands were driving the scene there. The Penetrators had Fred Records and the Flashcubes had their own label, Northside Records. They had issued a single and then an EP. The Flashcubes seemed to occasionally be brushing with moving on to the "big time." There is an interesting timeline there as to which came first. I couldn't swear on a bible. I am not sure if our single came out first or theirs did. I will tell you one thing: I was in my senior year at Syracuse University, spring semester 1977. I was walking along the quad and I saw a very well done poster for a band called the Flashcubes. That Friday night they were gonna play a club on campus called the Jabberwocky. I went to that show and it was there that, for the first time in my life, I saw that there was a punk/new wave scene in Syracuse. I met twenty people that night who I would go on to be friends with for the next seven years. It was that night that I discovered punk in central New York.

Mike: It seems like putting out your own record back then was a big deal.

Jack: When we get feedback from people over the years, the Penetrators are very much aligned with the whole DIY thing.

Mike: As far as distribution, did you have an easy time getting the singles out there? Were you aware of *Bomp! Magazine* and things like that?

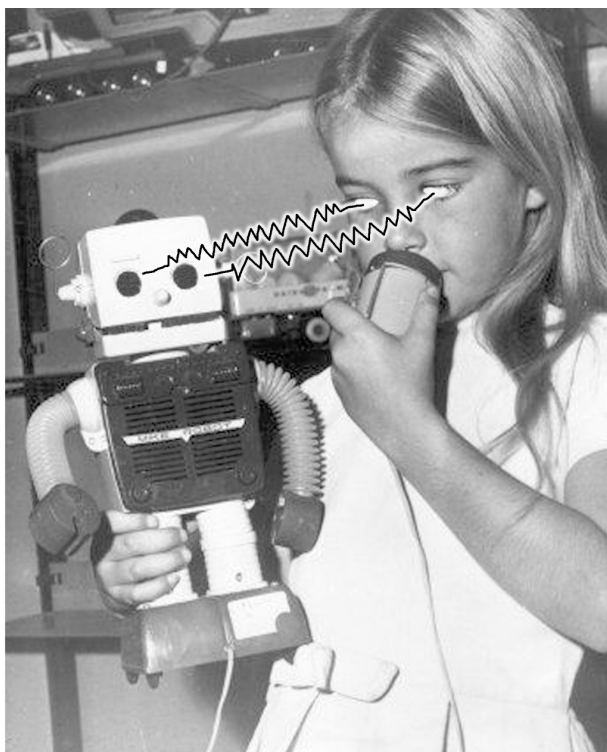
Jack: We got reviewed in a pretty big magazine of the day called *Trouser Press*. There were a lot of indie sub distributors then. We got distributed by Bomp! We got distributed by a company called Disc Trading Company. [laughs] It sounds like General Motors, but they were very cool in their day. They sold a lot of records for us. I'll tell ya, at the jobs (shows) and at the stores, we sold a lot of records. Syracuse was into it. That went well.

Mike: Were you aware of any of the other upstate New York bands like Distorted Levels from Rochester or Aunt Helen from Buffalo? I am always curious about how much info on other towns got out in those days.

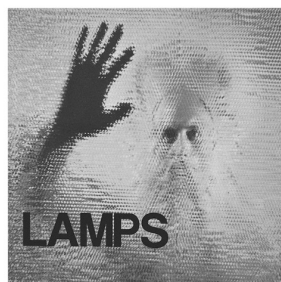
Jack: The Chesterfield Kings from Rochester. There was a band in Buffalo at the time called Billy Piranha and the Enemies. They were on Raw Records. There is a band that has not got its due. They had a four-song 12" called *Products of the Street*, one of my all time favorite recordings by anybody. When they came to Syracuse, it was a good time and a good show. I would single out that band from the Buffalo area, big time. I have not heard the names of those other bands you mentioned. It was kind of an insular thing in the big picture. If you played Utica, you'd sense a little bit of a different mindset there. Now, I'm biased, but I think Syracuse had the hottest scene. Everyone was trying to get down to CBGB's or play anywhere in New York City. NYC was the hot place. We certainly didn't look to Rochester or Buffalo for information. [laughs] After NYC, Syracuse thought we were the big thing at the moment. Word got around, but people are cliquey and are loyal to their own little circle there, loyal to the people they can see three times a week or whatever.

Mike: Did you get down to New York City to play very often?

Jack: We got down to NYC a couple of times, played some dumps down there. Did not play CBGB's. One show went pretty good, one not so good.



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Mike: How important did you feel touring was?

Jack: We weren't married to just playing the Syracuse/ New York scene. That was not our mindset. We had sent out a lot of promos of the record, the 45. In fact, we had gotten a nice response from a company back then called K-Tel Records. K-Tel, for a few months, was interested in signing the Penetrators. They had put together a deal where we were going to get to tour Europe with a K-Tel sponsored tour. We got a call and they had to know within the week if we would do it. We immediately said, "Of course." There were a couple of people in the band who I knew would be iffy about doing something like that so Spike and I arranged for backup people if they didn't want to do it. As I have said to Spike: "Any time that phone rang, we said yes." [laughs] We were not well managed. We were not well promoted. We did not have very good guidance. A bunch of younger people doing the best they can. We didn't make the right connections. We often were not sure how to go about doing things. There were a couple of booking agents in our area who really wanted nothing to do with us. We didn't play the kind of music they wanted, so we did the best we could. You know, we never broke up, never disbanded, or anything. But we certainly went through periods where we weren't as busy as other periods. Possibly we should have stayed very active longer. Maybe more things would have eventually happened.

Mike: Why did you slow things down in the '80s?

Jack: I think the Penetrators last live jobs as the Penetrators were in the early '80s. At that point, we continued to do some videos. We continued to do some recording. In fact, the album that made us, *Kings of Basement Rock*, didn't come out until the late '80s. We had expected it to come out much, much earlier. [laughs] The Penetrators definitely got to a point where music was coming out that people were really enjoying and we just were not out there every weekend in a live capacity, backing it up. Looking back, maybe we could have

done a better job of that. Elliott dabbled in a couple of things where he was drumming. He was in a pretty cool band where he was the only guy. It was an all-girl band with him on drums. That was called The New Breed. That was a very cool band that Elliott did shortly after the Penetrators.

As best as I recall, I got married around then and a lot of things changed in my life. [laughs] I went through a period where I wasn't doing that much musically. The New Breed never released anything officially. There may be some underground demos somewhere. Paul Bawol (Penetrators bassist), who was one of the producers of the band (New Breed), went on to form a band called Rave. Rave released a 4-song EP. It's called the *Rave EP*. I think if you go to fredrecords.com. Elliott still has a couple of copies left of that.

Mike: One of my favorite songs is "Drive Me Crazy." Was that originally just a guest appearance on your record?

Jack: Her stage name was Christian D'Orbit. Her real name was Adrian Ackle. Adrian lived in Syracuse in the late '70s and early '80s. She was always at the new wave/punk jobs. No matter who was playing, she was a fixture there. Spike had done some recording, and a few weeks after the fact, played me the four songs. I said, "That's pretty cool, but for me the one that really stands out is that 'Drive Me Crazy' song." Not too long after that, Spike and I wanted to take Fred Records to another level. We thought instead of just Penetrators, maybe we could put out a record by some local people in the area. Thusly, the Christian D'Orbit "Drive Me Crazy" / Curtis Seals "The Scandalizer" single eventuated. Curtis, after that, was to become a member of the Penetrators, both live and in the studio. You can see him prominently featured on the *Live at Kennys, 1980* LP. Ironically, that single has been assimilated into the Penetrators family, essentially because it was included on the *Kings of Basement Rock* album. We're very proud of that, but the truth is that our initial thought was that maybe we could develop other people. We weren't really—financially or in any position—to develop anybody. [laughs] As the years went by, everything has fallen under the Penetrators umbrella. Everybody was involved in one way, shape, or form. It has been a real good thing.

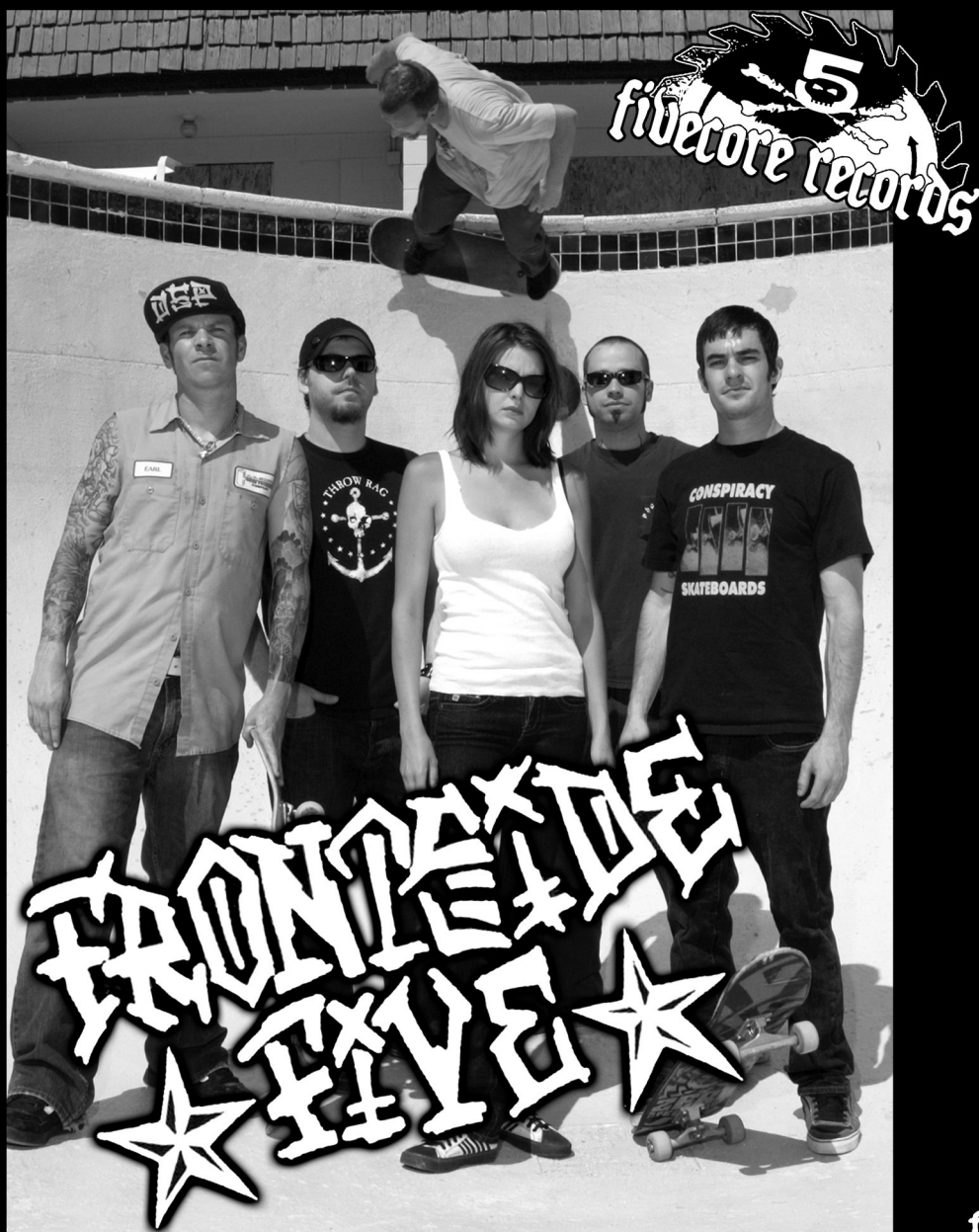
Mike: How did the Rave Up reissues come about?

Jack: Back in 1999 or 2000, somewhere in there, Elliott had established the Fred Records website. He began to get emails from the Killed By Death crowd. In particular, a guy called Behjan within those circles. Through those contacts, "Teenage Lifestyle" got included in a KBD compilation album called *All American Punk, Volume 19*. That was our first inroad into tapping into what was then this KBD market. Through Behjan, we got to know Pierpaolo of Rave Up Records. I am pretty sure the first release on Rave Up was an EP by the Penetrators. It was called *Watch Out for The Penetrators*, which was our two 45s put together on a four-song EP. I believe he pressed five hundred copies of that and that sold out within two weeks. That was a hot record. Well, the success of that record caught his attention, needless to say. [laughs] The reissue *Kings of Basement Rock* was a strong seller for him. He then went on to put out the *Live at Kennys* LP and the *Spike* LP. That laid all the groundwork for the Swami Records reissue.

Mike: Was John from Swami familiar with you already or did he hear of you from the Rave Up releases?

Jack: My understanding of how all that started was at the Chicago Blackout that we played, Ernie Quintaro filmed all the bands. He shot

Any time that phone rang,
we said yes.
We were not well managed.



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- 7-1-07 PEPPERS TAVERN, OCEAN CITY, MD.
- 7-2-07 VELVET LOUNGE, WASHINGTON, D.C.
- 7-3-07 LUCKY'S, WILMINGTON, N.C.
- 7-5-07 REPENT BAR, ATHENS, GA.
- 7-6-07 KONA SKATE PARK, JACKSONVILLE, FL.
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the videos that appear on our website now. Essentially, it was through Ernie Quintaro that Spike got connected with Swami John. In fact, in the *Basement Anthology* liners, Ernie is credited with "Valuable Liaison Work." [laughs] We had never been in the stores before, period. Believe it or not, it's the first CD featuring the Penetrators. Vinyl has its purpose and appeal, but there is a whole different market out there for CD, quite frankly. He brought us to a whole new level. From the liners to the artwork, Swami did a great job. The songs sound a lot better. I have listened to that stuff a lot and pretty closely and I was very pleased with what he did and they continue to distribute it well.

Mike: As far as you doing solo stuff, is that more recent?

Jack: Well, I said I kind of gave up a little bit of interest in music when I got married. I redeveloped an interest in the music after I got divorced. [laughs] How about that? [laughs] So, yeah, I got divorced a few years ago and some very cool things were happening with the Penetrators. Elliott was living in the Boston area near me and that's when I got back into it. It was the best thing in the world to happen to me. I had the maturity and the wherewithal to try and do things a little bit better at this stage of my life. My priority one will always be the Penetrators. That's what people want and that's great to see. Elliott moved to Austin, Texas. Elliott and I live in different parts of the country, so I began to forge my own solo career. The *Bad Boy* CD came out in January of 2004. I still continue to push it and sell it as a "new release." Someone like me only gets to do so many records in a lifetime. [laughs] So,

that will be my new record, I suspect, for awhile. I have gotten a good response to it. One knock is, "Why didn't you do more songs?" The answer to that is I didn't have the time and money to do more songs.

Mike: Any new Penetrators coming out?

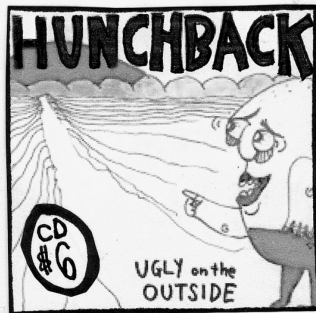
Jack: I would be remiss if I didn't mention the following: The Penetrators collectively have a brand new studio album in the final stages of being mixed. The tentative working title is *The Penetrators—Back Atcha!—The Studio Sessions 2000-2006*. It's a very strong, powerful musical statement; probably a more cohesive statement than *Basement Anthology*. It's a bit more straight up—dare I say—



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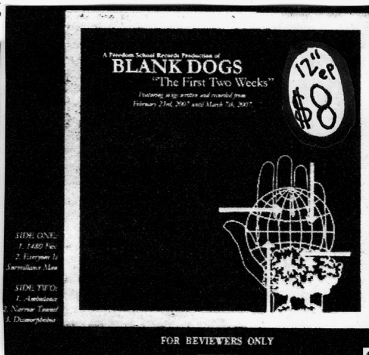
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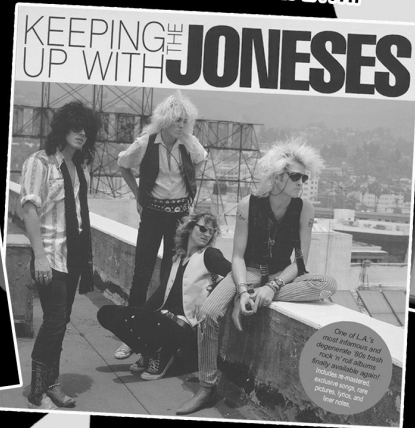
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Disco was the first time I realized
that big money and big business
had such influence over the masses.



power rock'n'roll side of the Penetrators, that only the Penetrators can really do justice to, maybe not such a punk thing at this point. That's what we are pointing at right now, getting this record out. Elliott and I have very talented people ready and willing to back us up with a little notice. As far as a live capacity, I would say the Penetrators are indeed available for select jobs. We are not going to play Joe's Bar and Grill for gas money. We have done enough of that. [laughs] We played the Chicago Blackout in 2003. We played with the Hard Feelings and I had not met them until that night. So, I don't have to tell you there were no rehearsals or anything. We just went up there and did it, but it went awfully good. It went well and the crowd made the show. There is an audience out there for us now that I think is bigger and more entrenched and more knowledgeable than even the late '70s, early '80s. Musically, the band is better now than it has ever been. We'd like people to give a chance to the new stuff as well.

"If I'm trash,
I don't care,
People see me,
they stare.
But you can't
get on my case
When I wear my
Rock'n'roll Face"
—Penetrators,
"Rock'n'roll Face"

Check out the websites:
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TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Amy Adoyzie

Top 5 Things That I'm Semi-Embarrassed about Looking Forward to When I Return to the States

- America's Next Top Model
- '80s Night Dancing
- Being an uppity American with a strong sense of entitlement
- Sparks
- Gettin' laid (not so embarrassed about)

Ben Snakepit

1. Bitter Homes and Gardens, CD
2. Bi-Furious, CD
3. The Measure (SA), *Historical Fiction* LP
4. Off With Their Heads / Practice split 7"
5. Ringers, *Detention Halls* CD

Bradley Williams

- Top 5 Bands of This Year*
1. Shellshag
 2. Ghostly Grimey Orchestra of New Orleans
 3. Tulsa
 4. Killer Dreamer
 5. Sleepwalkers R.I.P.

Buttertooth

1. *Outlaws of America* (book) by Dan Berger
2. Play Pretty for Baby, EP
3. Old Time Relijun, 2012 12"
4. Fugazi, *Repeater* CD
5. Sea and Cake live at the Belly Up Tavern, Solana Beach.

Craven Rock

- Top 5 Things about Mexico*
1. Monkeys (animal)
 2. Teotihuacán ruins
 3. The Spanish language
 4. San Cristobal (village)
 5. Cenotes (or sinkholes)

Daryl Gussin

- Surrender 7"
- Svartenbrandt, *Från Andra Sidan Spären...*
- Siege, *Drop Dead*
- Black SS, *Foreign Object*
- Pterodactyls / Shred Savage split 7"

Dave Disorder

1. Ringers, *Detention Halls* CD
2. Off With Their Heads / Blotto split 7"
3. Hot New Mexicans, *Wah 7"*
4. Sick Sick Birds, *Chemical Trains* EP
5. Dan Padilla / Gleam Garden split 7"

Designated Dale

1. The Measure, *Union Pool 7"*
2. Dan Padilla / Madison Bloodbath split 7"
3. Mega City Four, *Sebastopol Rd.* LP
4. Dramarama, *California Uber Alles* single
5. Johnny Thunders, *Hurt Me* LP

Donofthedeath

- My Wife
- La Fraction, *La Vie Revee* CD + *Live*
- A Happy Death, *Letter to the Dead* CD
- Pisschrist / Oroku, live
- Severed Head Of State, *Power Hazard*, 12"

Greg Barbera

- Cross Laws' *Behind the Curve* EP
- Kurt Vonnegut (R.I.P.)
- Meerkat Manor (Animal Planet's "reality" show)
- My new 13 inch MacBook laptop!
- Jumbo's Clown Room

Jennifer Whiteford

- Top Five Things I Learned on the Geek and Dork Tour 2007*
1. Todd Taylor does not believe

it's ever wise to complain about ice cream.

2. Kalamazoo, Michigan has a really great frisbee golf course.
3. New Jersey is not actually in New York State.
4. Somewhere in Ohio there is a street named "Fangboner Avenue."
5. Mike Faloon swears more when he's drunk.

Jimmy Alvarado

- (no particular order)
- Cuco Sanchez, *Mexicanísimo* CD. Hands down, one of the true greats.
 - Sahuia, *Arm a Ghetto* CD. Repping East Los punk in fine fashion.
 - Toy Dolls and Discharge CD reissues. Bless you, Captain Oi.
 - Beat Beat Beat, *Living in the Future* CD. Great great great.
 - Busdriver, *RoadKillOvercoat* CD. "Wowed the world," indeed.

Joe Evans III

1. Defect Defect, *Words 7"* and live.
2. Sick Sick Birds, *Chemical Trains 7"* EP
3. The Ergs!, *Upstairs/Downstairs* CD
4. Hearing that Dick Army's playing again.
5. The Shemps and I Farm *We Play Darts* Midwest Tour '07

Josh Benke

- The Pets, "Let's Go" b/w "I Want Fun" 7"
- The Rock'n'Roll Adventure Kids, "Hotdog" b/w "Panties in My Pocket" 7"
- Mark Sultan, *The Sultan Verses* LP
- Cheater Slicks, *Walk into the Sea* LP
- Neil Diamond, *You Got to Me 7"*

Julia Smut

- Jeff Davis and his hair
- sock knitting
- dust allergies that feel like the Plague
- The Alley in Fullerton, CA
- the Tiki Room

Keith Rosson

1. Criminal Damage, live
2. Maaster Gaiden, live
3. *The Coast of Good Intentions* by Michael Byers (short stories)
4. *The Changers* by Ezra Clayton-Daniels (graphic novel)
5. Dan Padilla / Madison Bloodbath split 7"

Kurt Morris

1. *Brainscan* #21
2. *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (film)
3. Seattle International Film Festival
4. *For the Bible Tells Me So* (film)
5. Trader Joe's

Liz O.

Top 5 Recent Shows

1. The Noisettes @ Henry Fonda Theater 3/20/07
2. The Bubonic Plague @ M/R/X 2/03/07
3. The Autumns @ Red Dragon Studios 3/29/07
4. Kate Havnevik @ Hotel Café 3/27/07
5. Elvis Perkins & Let's Go Sailing @ Largo 3/24/07

Maddy Tight Pants

1. Bla Bla Blacksheep (Minneapolis cute pop explosion!)
2. Kimya Dawson, *Hidden Agenda* CD
3. Cheburashka! (Russian cartoons are go!)
4. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (book)
5. Jerry Falwell's death!

Maynard

Top 5 Songs That Helped Me Print Gig Posters This Week

- High On Fire, "Blessed Black Wings"
- Toy Dolls, "Nellie the Elephant"
- The Crass, anything from *Christ: the Musical*
- Sunn O))), "Candlegoat"
- Plastic Bertrand, "Ça Plane pour Moi"

Megan Pants

1. Getting into the school I wanted even though I'm now anxious about moving, going back to school, and figuring out how

"Jerry Falwell's death!"

I'm going to pay for all of it.
 2. Ergs: *Upstairs/Downstairs*, their split with Grabass Charlestons, and live
 3. Ringers: *Detention Halls*
 4. Chinese Telephones / Dear Landlord split 7"
 5. Pterodactyls / Shred Savage split 7"

Mike Faloan

Five Great Moments from the Radio Heartbeat Power Pop Festival

1. The DJ played Screen Test between bands (Viva Syracuse Pop!).
2. The Pointed Sticks finally played NYC.
3. The Fevers kicked off their set while the curtains were still opening.
4. The Yum Yums covered Cub's "New York City" while wearing matching "I (Heart) NY" t-shirts.
5. Having a Yuengling with Josh from *Now Wave*.

Mike Frame

1. Dinosaur Jr., *Beyond* CD
2. Ian Hunter, *Shrunken Heads* CD
3. Betty Davis self-titled CD
4. Queers, *Munki Brain* CD
5. Hellacopters, *Rock N Roll Is Dead* CD

Miss Namella J. Kim

5. Manu Chao: political activism minus the pretense.
4. Mika Miko: off to Europe to bring their chaotic art punk to a bunch of chaotic art punks.
3. Wait Think Fast: Ex-Central City Transmission's keyboardist introduces the new cool.
2. The Clorox Girls: on a European tour with The View; ready to conquer America.
1. MC Balls Deep at my birthday karaoke party at All Star Lanes in Eagle Rock, CA. He totally ruled!

MP Johnson

1. Brother Ali, *The Undisputed Truth* CD
2. Rihanna, *Good Girl Gone Bad* CD
3. The Films of Alejandro Jodorowsky DVD Box Set
4. Free Comic Book Day
5. Minotaurs

Naked Rob (KSCU 103.3FM)

1. Red Fang, *Red Fang* Tour CD
2. The Radishes, *Good Machine* CD
3. Totalitar, *Vi Ar Eliten* CD

4. Midnite Snake, *Shaving the Angel* CD
5. Skulltime, *Skulltime* CD

Nardwuar The Human Serviette

1. *Ugly Things Magazine* #25
2. Garagehangover.com music blog
3. *Equalizing Distort Magazine*
4. The Nocturnals, *Greatest Hits* CD/DVD
5. Dead Vampires, *We are the Dead Vampires* CD

Puckett

Top 5 Records That Make Me Happy at the Moment

- Snowden: *Anti-Anti*. Last year, Jade Tree stopped that endless flow of cloying emo releases. Sure, this sounds like Wire and Gang Of Four and all the other bands that influenced Bloc Party, but this still fucking rules.
- The Hold Steady: *Boys and Girls in America*. Springsteen and the E Street Band turn into that drunk guy at the bar who keeps bellowing fucked-up stories in your ear—which basically means that this record sounds like a really close friend.
- Kath Bloom: *Finally*. I can't get enough of this record or Karen Dalton's *In My Own Time*. Together, these albums made me finally understand and appreciate Joanna Newsom, although I still scratch my head about Joni Mitchell.
- Wintersun: *Wintersun*. Dudebro from some black metal band or another goes solo, then writes an album filled with swords and sorcery and warriors bleeding to death in the snow, then records the entire thing by himself, double bass drums and all. Utterly amazing.
- Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings: *Dap-Dappin' With*. The Detroit Cobras do a more rock'n'roll take on this style, but Sharon Jones And The Dap-Kings go back to the days of Ike and Tina and drop a record that is straight-up ass-shaking soul. You can't like rock'n'roll and not like this record. Trust me.

Ryan Gelatin

Random Top 5

- ghost hunting
- *I Shall Destroy All the Civilized Planets*: The Fantastic Comics Of Fletcher Hanks
- The old man at the post office who told me about the great abundance of ponies that were eaten during World War II
- Buying my first guitar
- "Let's Go On a Date" by Andrew W.K.

Ryan Leach

1. Christian Parenti's *Lockdown America*
2. Gabriel Hart's solo thing
3. Black Time
4. Flannery O'Connor
5. Philamore Lincoln's LP (thanks, Jeff)

Sarah Shay

1. The Senate at Folklife, May 25 2007 (live show)
2. Steel Tigers of Death (band's very existence)
3. Old Technology (buskers)
4. Fake Problems, *Where Our Bodies Go* CD
5. Patti Smith, *Twelve* CD

Sean Koepenick

Shows I Am Looking Forward to in Summer 2007

- Julie Ocean-Velvet Lounge-DC-6/13/07. New power pop combo featuring ex-members of Swiz, Velocity Girl, Weatherhead, and Saturday People.
- Rockin' The Colonies Tour-Pier Six Pavilion-Baltimore, MD-7/4/07. The Psychedelic Furs, The Alarm, and The Fixx. Cool tunes, Natty Bo's and fireworks!
- Insubordination Fest-Baltimore, MD-7/5-7/7/07. At The Sidebar and then The Ottobar. So many bands, it boggles the mind.
- Frank Caliendo-DC Improv-7/18/07. I'm hoping he will be so funny I will spit out my vodka tonics a few times.
- Virgin Festival-Pimlico Racetrack-Baltimore, MD-8/5/07. I keep telling myself that if The Police suck, at least I have Cheap Trick!

Steve Larder

1. Corrupted, *El Mundo Frio* CD
2. Canvas / Hard To Swallow, split CD
3. A Silver Mount Zion, *He Has Left us Alone...* CD
4. Brian Lee O'Malley, *Scott Pilgrim #2* (comic)
5. Jeffrey Brown, *Feeble Attempts* (comic)

Steve

1. Tim Armstrong, *A Poets Life* CD/DVD
2. One Time Angels, *Sound of a Restless City* CD
3. The White Stripes, *Icky Thump* CD
4. Mikey Dread, *Dread at the Controls* LP
5. Paris Hilton going back to jail. Why I care I don't know but a little piece of me is very, very, very pleased that she is going to be left in a room with nothing but her inane thoughts for twenty some odd days.

The Lord Kveldulf

1. The Great St. Louis, *Forever Now* CD
2. Venerea, *One Louder* CD
3. *Achilles in Vietnam* by Jonathan Shay (book)
4. *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray (book)
5. Negative Approach and the Meatmen playing a sold out show here in Detroit

The Rhythm Chicken

Top Five Drummers of All Time!

5. David Sandstrom, Swedish inhuman geniusness
4. Peter Moffet, *You and Crash-era* Government Issue
3. Pete Hayes and Mike Gent, *The Figgs*
2. The Loon (Moon, Keith)
1. Animal (*The Muppet Show*)

Todd Taylor

- All Ergs!: *Upstairs/Downstairs* LP, *Blue 7"*, Grabass Charlestons split 7", Lemuria split 7"
- Tranzmitors, Self-titled LP, *"We Are Alone with You" b/w "Between Planets" 7"*
- Surrender, Self-titled 7"
- Measure [SA], *Old Crow 7"*
- *The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus* (book) by Wred Fright
- Potential Johns / High Tension Wires / Marked Men / Riverboat Gamblers Texas brain trust.

Travis T.

- The Ergs / Lemuria, split 7"
- *Madman* comics, Mike Allred (FINALLY!)
- Head, *No Hugging! No Learning!* LP
- Florida's Dying Wet T-shirt Wild Weekend
- *All Star Batman & Robin* #5, Frank Miller & Jim Lee (comics)

Ty Stranglehold

Top 5 Bands that I Found in Razorcake and Now Love

1. Riverboat Gamblers
2. The Marked Men
3. Radon
4. Regulations
5. Dan Padilla

Uri G.

1. Cleveland Indians baseball
2. The Circle One and X-mist interviews in *Razorcake* #38
3. Horseshoes and Bocce with grandpa for five hours
4. Against Me! LIVE twice
5. The NBA Eastern Conference Champions

Hey! Person putting your reviewable in the mail: full album art is required for review. Pre-releases go into the trash.

RECORD REVIEWS



I wanna put this on every day and make the dudes having random sex in my alley look in the window and feel jealous of the good time this 45 is.

-Speedway Randy

ALMIGHTY HANDCLAPS, THEE: *Make You Mine: 7" EP*

Sounds like what the Mummies would have sounded like if, instead of being real humans (or Russell Quan units) merely wrapped in Ace™ bandages, they were actual corpses from EC Comics that somehow gained life of their own and chose to try to sound like the Mummies trying to sound like the Sonics trying to play "Sixteen Tons" by Tennessee Ernie Ford. I got the fear, but didn't really hear any handclaps. BEST SONG: "Full-Time!" BEST SONG TITLE: "The Handclap Shake" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I would have incorporated Thee Almighty Handclaps data on "shaking" into my column this issue had I actually understood any lyrics other than "shake." —Rev. Nørb (Thee Almighty Handclaps)

ANNIHILATION TIME: *Cosmic Unconsciousness: 7"*

Liked the first LP. Was okay with the second one. Live, they are freakin' awesome. This 7", in my opinion, blows away what I have heard previously of their recorded material. The full-on Black Flag / Blast worship meets dirty stoner rock with a love for the almighty Black Sabbath is fully achieved on the opening track "Reality?" That one is a five-plus minute concoction that doesn't seem as long as it really is. Starts with a head banging intro that makes you want to smoke a joint and put your lighter in the air and I haven't smoked pot in over twenty years. The song struts forward like a slap in the face with its Greg Ginn-like guitar assault. Then the songs go for the slow, sludgy breakdown in the middle so you can catch your breath or light up a new one. Before you can finish what you are doing, they go for one last hurrah to end the madness. I can't wait to hear this song live. Two songs fill the backside that rock just as hard. If you can imagine the MC5 as a modern day punk band, then you can get a small idea of what they are like. If you are fortunate enough to see the band live and don't feel moved by the music, you must be stoned. —Donofthedeath (Tankcrimes)

ANTELOPE: *Reflector: CD*

Dischord Records has always had a unique place in my life. Since getting into punk, I have always had an appreciation for the politics and camaraderie that was displayed amongst the Dischord bands. The

music though...the music doesn't so much lack my appreciation as it frustrates my repeated attempts to want to give Dischord the place I desire to give it, upon an almighty throne of what a true scene should be. No doubt there are problems with the company that I'm unaware of, but on the whole it seems like a great example of what many record labels can (and do) try to become. What about the music? Yeah, Minor Threat was great, as was Fugazi. Much of the rest of the catalog seems like hits and misses to me: Jawbox? Hell yeah. Q And Not U? Amazing. Marginal Man? Uh, never heard of them. Skewbald? What? Who are some of these bands? I'll tell you who they are: the vast majority of them are bands who only put out one or maybe two albums on the label and then broke up, depriving fans of the fully mature musical. Antelope is a current Dischord band, one that is active and putting out music and could go either way on the list of Amazing/Who? This is the band's first full length (with an EP and 7" under their belt) and it's ten songs coming in at twenty-five minutes, which means a lot of quick action in that tangled, strange indie rock sound that one might have heard with some of the more recent Dischord bands. A lot of the material here is really catchy and borders on being fun at times. However, there are also tracks like "Wandering Ghost" which is somewhat annoying with its continuous monotone delivery of the song title. I want to hear more of Antelope, and with songs this short, maybe a longer album, too. I have a feeling there could be some good things in store for this band and with an ex-member of El Guapo, there certainly is a history of creativity within the band.

It's just a matter of time to see where they fit on the list of Dischord bands. —Kurt Morris (Dischord)

ANTIBALAS: *Security: CD*

Antibalas are sorta like the East Coast cousin of West Coast band Ozomatli. While the two share the same penchant for infusing politics into their tunes and find inspiration from much of the same music sources—including jazz, funk, and Latin percussion—Antibalas draw their primary influence not from Cuban *son*, like Ozomatli, but rather from "Afrobeat," a hybrid style that takes equal parts of the above and adds musical strains from Nigeria and West Africa. The result is highly listenable music, heavy on the "jam." Before you run away in anti-hippie horror, we're talking more along the lines of Miles Davis than suffering through yet another helping of the Grateful Dead "Dark Star"—light on the lyrics and brimming with talent. It may not be something that easily fits within the confines of "Top 40" radio (and if that's what you're looking for, I'm frankly a little perplexed about why you're reading this magazine, but I digress), but more often than not the best music doesn't, and the *groove* this is built upon is so deep and so heavy that it's hard not to pay attention. —Jimmy Alvarado (Epitaph/Anti)

ATTACK FORMATION: *We Are Alive and in Tune: CD*

Oh me, oh my, I'm okay with admitting that this might just be beyond me. According to what I've deciphered from the enclosed illustration, some people use a vibraphone (or is that a marimba?), a trumpet, a drum set, about a dozen abacuses, and a tennis racket to come up with a sound that's

sort of like Japanther, but without the vocals filtered through telephone mics. There are definite parts I like, but there's always one layer too much in each song that ends up ruining it all for me. —Megan (Australian Cattle God)

AVENUE ROSE: demo CD-R

If a one trick pony is ridden over and over again, do you end up with an eight trick pony, or is it called something else since it's the same trick, but a different pony? Bar rock'n'roll, not offensive enough to need the chicken wire and not good enough to be the reason to be at the bar. Forgettable at best. —Megan (Avenue Rose)

BE MY DOPPELGANGER: *Convertible Girls: 7" EP*

Yay! Summertime punk rock! Totally silly and cool back-up vocals! Silly pop punk songs about shirtless girls, cutting your eyes out with a knife, and a show sans air conditioning! The back of their record looks like it was laid out by Rev. Nørb, but layout credit is given to a mysterious Mark, who must be familiar with the following fact: Having your record laid out by Rev. Nørb is, in 98.5 percent of cases, a guarantee that your record will rock. In fact, I think this connection is stronger than that between cool boys and boys who wear pink Converse shoes! Oh, the science! If this were a cereal, it'd be a super special summer edition of Froot Loops! Yum! —Maddy (Bitchin' Riffage!)

BE MY DOPPELGANGER: *Convertible Girls: 7" EP*

Wait, don't skip past this review merely because of the band's "For the honor of signing to Jade Tree we would gladly part with all of our Pedro the Lion bootlegs" moniker. Be My Doppelganger are much better at writing and performing songs than they are naming bands. Sonically, they draw on pop punk like the Briefs (and visually the sleeve graphics seem to tip the cap to Rev. Nørb). "10 Seconds to Go" is the best cut, more aggressive than the others and catchier, too (reminds me of the Mighty John Waynes). It took me several listens to convince myself that they weren't singing "On the goddamn radio" in the chorus. A little confusion never got in the way of a good time. —Mike Faloon (Bitchin' Riffage)

BEAT BEAT BEAT: *Living in the Future: CD*

Okay, I'm gonna go out on a limb here and proclaim this my favorite record of the month. These guys are so clued into the whole early '80s OC punk sound that their cover of the Fun Things' "When the Birdmen Fly" sounds like a Klan outbreak. Nonetheless, the tunes showcased here are delivered with over-the-top enthusiasm and are sick with supremely catchy hooks and enough groove to keep your head bobbing for hours after it's over and done. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

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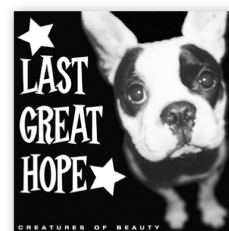


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PRINTING AND REPLICATION FOR INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS AND BANDS SINCE 1994

BIG FUN:***Passing the Time b/w Hold On: 7"***

The world doesn't need any more songs called "Hold On." You and I could drum up a list of two dozen "Hold Ons" and nary a one of them would prompt us to pause compiling our list to listen to the "Hold On" in question. Until now. I can, in good conscience, recommend Big Fun's "Hold On." Likewise for "Passing the Time." Power pop guitar lines reminiscent of the early Who and radiant vocals that remind me of Nikki Corvette or the Pinkz, songs where the verse and chorus blend together so well I don't notice the transitions and wouldn't care to. This single is the perfect soundtrack for mid-summer daydreaming (as well as a great record to have on hand for your next "originality is an overrated virtue" debate). —Mike Faloon (Put On)

BLACK ICE: *Myopia: CD*

To call Black Ice a death rock or, god forbid, a "goth" band seems a wee bit too pat. They pilfer a bit from both of those pigeonholes, surely, but there is so much more to them than just dressing like *Edward Scissorhands* extras and playing a piss-poor amalgamation of Bauhaus and bad disco. Smooshed in with all the gloomy-Gussin' is some early Savage Republic-type industrial thrashin' 'n' bashin', some cabaret, a dab of psychedelia and more than a little Bay Area art damage. Their efforts

are undeniably bleak in sound—these are tunes that might actually discourage suicidal behavior, 'cause ultimately, why even bother with that, man?—but they're smart enough to hard-wire enough catchiness into their sound and fury to encourage repeated listens. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hungry Eye)

BLACK SUNDAY: *Cut Out!: 7"*

The true Memphis Mafia rages on. Alicia's current band is on a roll, with the essence of Halloween-synth that she has perfected, maybe more poppy here in a good way. Great, infectious songs with a 4-track sensibility, minimalist keyboards, and jumpy beats. This 7" is Black Sunday "beta-version": Alicia and Ryan Rousseau from Reatards and Destruction Unit. I like the other B-Sunday albums with different members, but for some reason, this pared down version hits better with me. Raw = fun. —Speedway Randy (Tic Tac Totally)

BLANK DOGS:***The First Two Weeks: 12" EP***

I feel like I've just been tricked. Everything Freedom School had released so far was so good. Everything has seemed so original and authentic. And then I listened to the Blank Dogs 12" and it's so terrible I feel like I must be the butt of some terrible joke. And it would be a funny joke except for the fact that slow, lo-fi, echoed, drum machine, keyboard rock is no

laughing matter. Hopefully the new Hunchback album will be out soon and I can forget this record was ever released. —Daryl (Freedom School)

BLOTTO / DRUNKEN BOAT: *Split: 7"*

Blotto: It's nice to think that the Midwest is a state of mind—kinda like the Beach Boys making anyone hearing their songs feel like they should take up surfing, no matter where they were. In the Midwest, people seem nicer and strangers will often look you in the eye without hostility. The bands are definitely heartier. Blotto fits in right nicely with The Modern Machines and Off With Their Heads, only they're from Japan. And that makes perfect sense to me. Bouncy, rugged, ragged, smart punk with melody. I'm hardwired into liking 'em. Drunken Boat: They're getting better and better with each release because they seem to—instead of snuggling into a convincing patchwork of their influences from the Pogues (Their name is from a Pogues song {or a Rimbaud poem, take your pick}) to early '90s East Bay punk—are bleeding and sweating them out to a more pure and personal form to a voice all their own. Good stuff. —Todd (Snuffy Smiles)

BLOWTOPS, THE: *P.S.****This Is a Zombie: CD***

Drudgy, sludgy, thick rock that lies between garage punk and the lawn mower in the yard—heavier and not

quite as fuzzy horror as their other albums. Recorded for their Euro tour, but sort of lost until pulled up by Big Neck. I feel like it's too different than their previous albums, more crossover here, where I thought they existed in a nice, fucked-up kids horror punk world. They still will be liked there, but the kid may make some friends now. —Speedway Randy (Big Neck)

BORN BAD: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

These guys lay down some really good Midwestern hardcore along the lines of Negative Approach or, more recently, Out Cold. The downside is that although the tracks are recorded nice and raw, the vocals are mixed down just a wee bit too low. Other than that, you could easily point yer speakers at the nearest wall and blow a hole clean through. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fashionable Idiots)

BOSTON CHINKS: *Coltrane: 7"*

Youngsters from Memphis. There is one thing I can count on from Goner Records—ROCK. The Chinks are great! Quick and rough pop punk, somewhere in between the hooks of The Reds (pre-Marked Men) with gravel singing, but not annoying. Catchy, mostly clean with some static, it feels like a band with solid shit to come. They will be touring with/backing up Jay Reatard on his Euro tour. Let's see who survives. —Speedway Randy (Goner)



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BRAINS, THE: *Hell N' Back / No Brain, No Pain: CD*

I'm not a massive rockabilly fan, but I know and appreciate a fair amount. I enjoy it, but in moderate doses. The Brains just might be the exception to that rule. This disc seems to be mashing two albums together. It better be, clocking in at twenty five songs. That's a lot of twang and pomade for anyone, but I had no problem getting through the whole thing and enjoying it. They do a horror thing, so the majority of the songs are zombies, blood, corpses and such. Not really original by any means, but a lot of fun. Worth searching out. —Ty Stranglehold (Stumble)

BRAINWORMS: *Which Is Worse: CD*

Hairy, Richmond scene vets Brainworms play tuneful hardcore with the perfect balance of drive and technical stuff. I'm hearing the skronks and quirks of late '80s D.C. cold lampin' with Jesus Lizard's off-kilter guitar muscle. They even have wiseass song titles like "Phat Intentions" and "Break Down the Pajama Walls." I'll take a shot in the dark and say that when this band plays a house show, everyone takes a break from flirting and drinking beer in the alley, and comes in to watch, and for those twenty sweaty shirts-off-dudes-on minutes, all is right in the world. —CT Terry (Rorschach)

BRUTAL KNIGHTS: *Fest of Shame: CD*

Whoa, so this band totally rocks out? Straight forward, doesn't hold back rock: check. Part sleazy/ part hilarious songs like "Teach Me Sex" and "We Have a Website". CHECK. Yes, I think this band totally rocks out and I can't recommend this enough, whether you like heavier stuff or not. —Joe Evans III (Deranged)

BUSDRIVER: *RoadKillOvercoat: CD*

Some strange things appear to be afoot over at Epitaph. While their choices in punk fare have pretty much degenerated into a stable of generic, piss-poor bro-core fodder, their forays into the world of underground hip hop have been, for the most part, pretty fuggin' stellar, present company included. Schooled in the art of rhyme by members of the legendary Project Blowed—a loose community of Los Angeles MCs who count amongst their ranks such respected artists as Freestyle Fellowship, Abstract Rude, Acid Reign, The Nonce, Volume 10, and Of Mexican Descent, to name a few—Busdriver specializes in a fiery, flashy form of rapping that doesn't so much transcend most of what you hear on "urban" radio stations as it does grab it by the lapel and slap it silly. His borderline abstract rhymes (if you listen close, however, there's more meaning in them words than you may think) are delivered in a light-speed staccato style that's drenched in alliteration so meticulously crafted

that his vocals become a percussive instrument unto themselves. This may be his most "accessible" album to date, and there is much here that sounds nice pumped up to eleven on a good thumpin' system, but most will find the included lyric sheet much needed to wade through the dense proceedings. Yeah, I know there's an abundance of weak shit tagged as "rap" out there, but I triple-dog-dare anyone to give this disc a listen and insist it's any less "art" than Charlie Parker or Romare Beardon. —Jimmy Alvarado (Epitaph/Anti)

BUSINESS, THE: *Keep the Faith: CD*

Usually when a band decides to give it another go, one of two things result from their efforts: 1.) they make total fools of themselves, 2.) they pick up right where they left off and just *kill*. This reissue of the Business' '90s "comeback" album leans towards the latter, thankfully, with much of the same strong, catchy songwriting and topical lyrics that made them such an indispensable part of the '80s U.K. punk scene. On here, they tackle the stupidity of Kurt Cobain's death, corruption, football heroes, and human obsolescence in a rapidly changing world with the same fire, wit, and righteous anger they once used to such effect on classic material like "Suburban Rebels" and "Real Enemy." There may have been a bit more "rock" to the guitars—but not so much as to send them tumbling into the "bad metal" camp—and the

occasional bluesy riff complements the "punk" quite nicely. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

CALL ME LIGHTNING:

Soft Skeletons: CD

Refined savagery? Or savage refinement? I think the latter. Call Me Lightning are like a hungry, feral beast with a surgeon's approach—their music rips you apart, but it's not a hammer blow, rather the more precise violence of the scalpel. It's always good to hear a band that doesn't need to rely on a truckload of heavily distorted power chords in order to be compelling. Their web bio claims influences of "too much of The Minutemen, not enough of The Birthday Party, and just enough Led Zeppelin" and that seems to be pretty accurate; the Minutemen and Birthday Party influences are clearly here in the band's minimalist tunes that have a spooky and slightly desperate and deranged air about them. This record rocks with the edge of a knife, alternating between surgical precision and mad, random stabbing. —The Lord Kveldulfr (French Kiss, www.callmelighting.com)

CHANNEL 3: *I've Got a Gun / After the Lights Go Out: CD*

Back when I was a kid, Channel 3 was one of them bands everybody seemed to love to hate in L.A., and I could never figure out why. I'm figuring most of that ire was based on some sorta jealousy at their being signed

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to Posh Boy or something, 'cause it certainly wasn't the music they was peddlin'. Nearly all of the music they produced during the early part of the '80s—their eponymous (a high-fallutin' rock crit word meaning "self-titled.") One must occasionally throw in such words or they kick you out of the union) 12-inch EP, the *Fear of Life* LP and the *After the Lights Go Out* LP—was prime-grade, impassioned Southern California hardcore punk that is simultaneously typical for its time period and somehow timeless, as evidenced by the popularity of the band's songs and the numerous times and ways it has been repackaged. The tracks from all the aforementioned records are here (although the order of the earlier tracks follows the U.K. *I've Got a Gun* release, which means the most of the EP and *Fear of Life* tracks are mixed up together and sequenced differently), along with the remaining U.S.-released tracks that didn't make the original U.K. pressings, an odd B-side and comp rarity, so what you get is essentially all the essentials a fan would need. Suffice it to say that despite what others said back then, I was always an unabashed fan of these kids and remain so, and if, after listening to this 'til it melts in your player, you find you need more, I highly recommend their most recent effort on Dr. Strange as your next purchase, as it's easily the next best thing to the stuff here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

CHelsea: *Faster, Cheaper & Better Looking*: CD

These legends of '77 have returned with a new record, and truth be told, I found it to be pretty rockin'. There isn't much to say about the musical content specifically—mid-tempo spirit of '77 punk'n'roll. But not stale. It comes off, for good or ill (may the listener decide), as a soundtrack for the aging punker. There are overtly political songs about social ills and governmental endeavors (thank you, Chelsea, for reminding me that England's men and women are dying in Iraq as well). But the overall concern appears to be the supremacy of music as a prime mover in the life of the individual; only a couple of songs focus on this theme overtly, but the very fact that Chelsea has taken the time to put out a new record, and a good one at that, makes this supremacy of music a subtext underlying all of the songs on the record. Consider: "Sod the War," an overtly political song, *is in fact a song*. Chelsea has used music as a vehicle for their thoughts and ideas, even at a later stage in life when most people are willing to sit in their chair and pop off a letter to the editor that may well never even be read. While often it comes off as entirely hokey for a "legend" to put out a new record years down the road, this is one of the few cases that I've seen in which the "legend" status actually adds great flavor to the stew. Maybe it's because the record appears to have sincere motivations in wanting to rock, or maybe it's because the record just rocks. —The Lord Kveldulfr (TKO)

CHILDREN'S CRUSADE, THE: *Get Awesome*: 10"

This batch of recordings is from 2002 and 2003, and in fact the band no longer exists. But I guess, as the story goes, this recording is what urged Adam and Jenna Alive to even start making records...as each year passed, the recording got older and the band kept fading from the memory of even those who knew of them. Then, just as it seemed this record was to be lost forever, fourteen releases in and It's Alive Records decides to pay homage to the recording that essentially started them off. The band wields Titlwheel's honesty, Fifteen's poetry, and Toys That Kill's clean yet full of fuzz and buzz recording quality. I'm not in love with this yet...but I will be soon. I'm on my sixth listen right now, and it just keeps getting better. Band members include Mike Napkin (The Minds, The Observers, Blood Bath & Beyond, Defect Defect), and Max from the Trashies.

—Mr. Z (It's Alive)

CHUCK RAGAN: "Do You Pray" b/w "Congratulations Joe": 7"

Chuck Ragan has made me revise the, "Oh, fuck this. An acoustic guitar? Absolutely not," thought bubble that automatically pops into my head when I walk into those situations. I'm prejudiced against the format that's all-too-often given the solo-act Blues Hammer treatment, yet Chuck translates a ragged heart so clearly, simply, and directly right onto vinyl

that it's startling. Hats off to his haunting, beautiful, and gutsy stuff. —Todd (No Idea)

CLOROX GIRLS: *J'aime Les Filles*: CD

First off, if these guys really believe the line from their press bio that attempts to sonically link them with Chuck Berry, Ritchie Valens, and Howlin' Wolf, they gotta be HUFFING Clorox®, not merely bleaching their hair with it. Truth be told, the band currently actually sounds like a cross between two other Portland bands, the Wipers and the Exploding Hearts—although curiously both overtly punker and overtly popper than either of them. Punky and poppy, with proper reverence for strong tunes of brief duration, yet with still a pervasive Wipersly aura of sadness and minor chords and shit and some weird fetish for French pop music tossed into the mix to throw the hounds off their trail. I like the band, but have always been troubled by the fact that none of their songs are particularly memorable. Case in point: I've listened to this disc numerous times, but am currently re-inserting it so I can see what is the... BEST SONG: Oh yeah, "Dreaming of St. Kiley." See, I knew that, but forgot it. Weird. BEST SONG TITLE: "Boys Girls," because I have issues with "Le Banana Split" being a cover not originally performed by the Banana Splits. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The liner notes include this statement: "MMM. 17 TV." —Rev. Norb (BYO)



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**CONTAMINATORS:
Non Existant Love: 7"**

Liked the sleeve, which has that retro-punk/new wave linear art look to it, and even thought the primal, almost haiku-type lyricism wasn't too bad either. The music, essentially overdriven rock/punk stuff, was kinda pedestrian. —Jimmy Alvarado (Going Underground)

COPYRIGHTS, THE: Make Sound: CD

I grew up outside of Vegas. My parents are frugal. We ate at tons of buffets. Somewhere right around graduating from high school, I finally learned something about eating. Take your time. No need to stack your plate up. You can always go back for more. It'll be there; casinos lose money on these things. They just need to keep the gamblers in the building. I didn't take my own advice with pop punk in the '90s. I fuckin' gorged myself at the table; pooping and puking the pop punk I couldn't rightly digest. Fast forward ten years. I have a gag reflex that I have to get over: the slight echo and reverb on the up-front vocals, gnat-ass tight instruments, whatever knob that pours syrup over the entire enterprise, makes me push back from the table before I take a bite. But not always. Because with bands like Teenage Bottlerocket and The Copyrights, I hear much more than just pop punk—although that's the moniker it'll be saddled with—it's bands like this, years later, that remind me why I sat down at the table

and grabbed a fork the first time. Real good album. Fun, tight, alive. —Todd (Red Scare)

COPYRIGHTS, THE: Make Sound: CD

The new offering from Carbondale's slowly growing saviors of punk rock. Okay, maybe they don't see themselves as such, and maybe they are saviors in my head alone...but god damn, this new album is amazing. It's leaps and bounds ahead of *Mutiny Pop*, which in turn was light years ahead of *We Didn't Come Here to Die*. Each time The Copyrights, put out a new album, the lyrics speak to me like no other albums have, and this is no exception. Lyrics like "I'm starting to feel like I'm on this city's menu, but I don't mind" are not only relevant to me right now, but are cleverly written—no simple "this city is eating me alive" here—uh, uh, no way. And yes, it's pop punk. But...if you were to play this album for anyone outside the punk rock underground...they would not only *not* be able to link this remotely to anything they know of as pop punk...but I bet you they'll start to wonder why it was *American Idiot* and not this album in their car CD changer right fucking now. And for those of you who get excited about amazing vocals, guest backups were offered up by Zack Rivethead, Brendan Kelley, and Danny Vapid. Super sweet. This shit is giving me cavities already. Ten stars out of five. Will this be at the top of my 2007

list? You know it, buddy. Now go buy it. We're never out here alone. Never. —Mr. Z (Red Scare)

**COPYRIGHTS, THE:
Mutiny Pop: Picture Disc LP**

People have called this album much like '90s Lookout Records material...but it's *much* better if you ask me, as it's catchier, less whiny or forced, and much fuller than the aforementioned recordings. I know reviewers never really touch upon the actual design or layout of albums for some reason...but I can't help myself on this one. Super orange and black splashes and streaks on the vinyl complementing the labels and artwork are having me do back flips of joy. The poster and lyric sheets are great too—you wanna put them both on your wall instantly! The artwork really doesn't attack you on the CD version as it does here. It's some special stuff. Makes you feel like a lucky holder of Willy Wonka's golden ticket. I promise. —Mr. Z (It's Alive)

DEFECT DEFECT: Words: 7"

I'm old fashioned. I involuntarily wince when a band I really dig breaks up (The Observers) and the folks go on to other bands. Totally unfair of me. Guilty. Suckin'. It takes a bit of time for the water to recede from the previous endeavor and listen to the new project by itself, of itself. Fact 1: Colin and Mike are two golden dudes who know how to play and

their ethics are unquestionable (again, old fashioned of me, I know). Fact 2: Instead of griping, or "pulling a Misfits" or "pulling a Dead Kennedys" and holding on to the vestiges of a once-great band, these two go a completely new route. Fact 3: Bands that clone Black Flag (pick your era) suck. Bands that find those hidden lightning bolts and charge their own brains can rule, and Defect Defect do just that. It's a straight-forward attack that's simple, yet mighty effective. Fact 4: I'll give any band that's named after a Wipers lyric more than the benefit of the doubt. Theory 1: I have the feeling they've got plenty of surprises up their sleeves and I can't wait to hear more. Conclusion: awesome. —Todd (Clarence Thomas, www.bistrodistro.com)

DEFECT DEFECT: Words: 7"

It's official; I still think Defect Defect are one of the best bands going in American punk today (actually, just make that punk). The A side is new versions of songs from the demo tape, and one of the best examples of making you feel like you're seeing a band live ever. The B side is one new song that's a little weirder, but makes me really anxious to see what kind of directions they're going in. Though at this rate, I don't want a full length, because if they tour the U.S. for every 7" they put out, my guess is that they'll somehow strap water skis to their van and literally drive it around

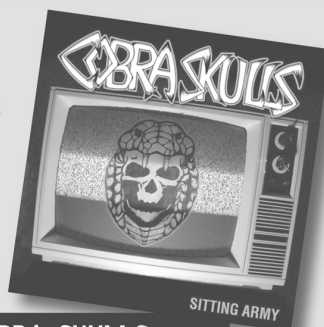
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the Earth to support an LP. Seriously, get into this band right now. —Joe Evans III (Clarence Thomas, www.bistrodistro.com)

DIRTY LOOKS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

I almost wish someone didn't tell me that this had a couple of folks from Bent Outta Shape (RIP) because my expectations for this just went through the roof.... This sounds disconnected to me. The music's great—that jangly, crisp, tight, fisty Hüsker Dü meets Replacements meets "indie band I won't care for but am glad that a punk band got something out of it" sound. But, for me, the vocals don't quite match up. Like Bossy (another Bent Outta Shape offshoot band), it almost sounds like they're fronted by Nico {shiver}. The voice itself (not a comment on the person singing) sounds disinterested, distant, almost drone, even when she's screaming. It's just kinda... weird that the *tone* of someone's voice makes such a difference, but it does. This 7" is like it's driving around with the parking brake on. Comes with a poster and a slip of paper that directs you to free MP3s of the songs, which is way thoughtful. —Todd (Iron Pier)

DISCHARGE: Why: CD

DISCHARGE: Hear Nothing See

Nothing Say Nothing: CD

DISCHARGE: Never Again: CD

Few bands have had such a profound influence on underground music, and a more embarrassing downfall,

than Discharge. For a fleeting period in the early 1980s—wherein they eked out one album, a few 12" EPs, and a slew of absolutely vital 7" EPs—they were pioneers of a sound that not only influenced, directly or indirectly, virtually every hardcore punk and speed metal band (check out Metallica and Anthrax's respective covers of "Free Speech for the Dumb" and "Protest and Survive" if you don't believe me) that formed in that period, but also provided the template for twenty-seven years' worth of Scandinavian, Japanese, and Brazilian thrash bands, and even a bevy of contemporary would-be claimers to their throne, who peddle their wares under the "D-beat" banner. Of the three releases here, *Why* and *Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing* are indispensable—a one-two primal scream against wars and the corrupt states that wage them that starts out with a bone-crunching wallop with "Visions of War" and doesn't let up until the listener reaches "The End," the last track on the latter. To sweeten the deal, every track from the aforementioned 12" and 7" EPs have been appended to these two discs, resulting in a nice overview of the band's most important period. The third disc, *Never Again*, is a "greatest hits" package of sorts thrown together after guitarist Bones bailed to form Broken Bones with brother (and fellow former Discharge member) Tezz. While all the songs on it are, indeed, some of their best,

someone had the bright idea to remix them, and the result was a complete watering down of their sound and all the power the songs originally had is effectively lost. Those interested in the train wreck the band's career became—by 1986 the metal influence that had been threatening to creep in came crashing down and, coupled with Cal's sudden interest in trying to sound like Rob Halford, they essentially became a glam band—would find their morbid curiosity more than sated with just one listen to the tracks from their *Ignorance* and *The More I See* EPs, included on the disc, which are as good a starting place as any to identify the beginning of their quick slide into suckdom, a condition that remained chronic until the band returned to form twenty years later on 2002's *Discharge* album. Long story longer, my recommendation is to pick up the first two discs here then skip straight to the 2002 album and proceed to the third here only if someone gives it to you, you're some kind of silly collector nut, or you're a bit of a masochist. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

DOA: Punk Rock Singles 1978-99: CD

Unless you've been living in a lead box buried eighteen feet under a very large rock, I really don't need to delve too deep into the utter fuggin' brilliance of DOA, do I? Sure, their best years were pretty much spent by 1987, and I personally have on more than one occasion lamented their not

really living up to their legendary status in recent years. That said, this singles collection covering the years 1978-99 is pretty goddamned good. As can be expected, the early tracks—including "Disco Sucks," "My Old Man's a Bum," "World War Three," "The Prisoner," their cover of the Subhumans' anthem "Fuck You," and many more—are the real gems here, but, surprisingly, the weakest tracks come not at the end but somewhere in the middle. The strength of the latter tracks has me wondering if maybe they should go the single route more often to slough off some of the chaff that has been making it onto their albums in recent years, 'cause it's evident that they can still come up with some rip-roaring tuneage when they've the mind. Ultimately, this comes highly recommended, it feels marvy to say that about a DOA record again, and the eternal optimist in me looks forward to saying the same about a fresh batch of tunes from them one day. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

DOGZUKI: Mind the Gap: CD

The two things I thought while listening to this is D-Generation and the Adicts meets the Dead Kennedys. Kind of trashy rock'n'punk meets melodic U.K. '82 with theatrics. Not too overproduced, but tight in musicianship. Kind of out of the box at times but that's what keeps things interesting. —Donofthead (Cultjam)

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DOLLYROTS, THE:
Because I'm Awesome: CD

When I used to listen to the radio a couple of years ago, I would listen to Dickey Barret in the mornings here in L.A. before he got fired. He used to play, every once in awhile, a song called "Wreckage" by a band called the Dollyrots. Every time that song came on, it would put on a smile on my face and I would be bopping down the street in my car blasting the stereo. I loved that the vocals were cutesy in a bubblegum way and snotty too. The music with its hard hitting 4/4 drumming and the driving, clean guitars made the song instantly infectious. I never really got off my ass to go look for the release, but it definitely is on my list of things to buy if I ever come across it. So it's kind of funny that I got the newest release for review. This release has a stronger sound than the previous song that I heard, like they are coming from the garage to the stage. It's more in your face and has a stronger rock sound. The signature vocals are there but there seems to be more confidence in delivery. The guitars are bolder and punch with much more force. The bass is solid and recorded with the tones that make you feel the notes. Something about the drumming of this band makes me want to pogo because it makes the songs sound more fun. Like the title suggests, the pop geek in me agrees that they are awesome! Now I really need to get searching for that previous release. —Donofthead (Blackheart)

DUB TRIO: Cool Out and Coexist: CD

This mixture of metal and dub reggae comes off as an attempt to answer the question, "What if King Tubby had recorded Helmet?" Their efforts at thinking outside the box are noble, and are most solid when they stick to straight-ahead dub ("Drive-By Dub") and the more spacey experiments ("Extract"). Things are less successful, however, when they start incorporating the crunchy metal riffs because the switch from one style to another is so jarring that it sounds like someone clicking from one radio station to the next rather than one fluid thought. —Jimmy Alvarado (ROIR)

DUSTHEADS: Tall Tales I: 7"
DUSTHEADS: Tall Tales II: 7"

I've been going back to the punk music of 1989 as part of a project. '89 was definitely a quiet reconstruction year: grunge (or proto-grunge) was emerging neck and neck with Amphetamine Reptile, and (to no fault of AmRep) the cloning machines that poop out bands after a wave of popularity weren't quite running. (Don't blame the founders. Blame the clones. Mudhoney's first record's great stuff.) It was a diverse time and, looking back, the music landscape was wide open; partially, because it was a time to pick up long-neglected pieces, partially a time to discover a new "new music." Dustheads, I salute you. They're commingling that abrasive, breathless shouting of Big Black, that reckless rock abandon of early Zeke,

a smidge of Laughing Hyenas, and a heavy dollop of "my pants are on fire today," unafraid to put their own spin on the whole mess. Here are two 7"s that are thematically tight and well worth listening to all the way through, even when they spool out and get all Sabbathly. —Todd (Don Giovanni)

ENDLESS BLOCKADE, THE / HATRED SURGE: Split: LP

Saw these two bands on tour with Iron Lung back in February. Great show. The record was done but was missing due to a UPS error. So no tour edition for me. But I had already procured a regular copy on clear and red splatter vinyl that was on the way. Yup, I'm a record nerd sometimes. It looks so pretty! If you are one angry muthafucker, this release just might pacify you. The Endless Blockade hail from Toronto, Canada. Picture your friend kicking you repeatedly in the gonads (if you are male) until you black out from the pain. This could be the accompanying soundtrack that goes through your mind while you are enduring the punishment—extreme bipolar fits of rage going from extreme sludgy dirge to manic fits of thrash rage. It amazes me that this was ever conceived. But seeing this band a couple of times live was proof enough for me. Hatred Surge brings a can of Texas-sized whoop ass. Straight for the throat, choke you while being suspended in the air hardcore. But watch out when they go to supersonic mode and attack you with the blast

beats. The band also uses feedback to its advantage to bring on a sour mood before slamming you with some heavy power chords accompanying the banging of drums that sound like they were super sized. Dual male and female vocals with angered delivery add to the flavor. This is one puffed out chest, standing tall release. No matter how angry I might feel, these two bands make me look like a cartoon character. —Donofthead (Schizophrenic)

ERGS!, THE / LEMURIA: Split 7"

Ergs!: Man, they write some fuckin'-a happy sad songs—stuff that you want to shout at the top of your lungs when it'd almost be embarrassing to write them down in a diary. More great original material—with Theremin outro. The Gin Blossoms cover: Facts I have to face. 1.) I was at ground zero, Flagstaff, AZ when the Gin Blossoms ruled that hippie stinkhole of a music scene every time they came and played. It soured me plenty when this song became a hit. Those guys were douche bags of the highest slurpage. I have booed the Ergs!—with vigor and shaken fist, yet with a smile—when they've played this live. Some scars take more time to heal. If you didn't have to live through it, I guess it'd be more tolerable. Lemuria: 50/50. I learned a bit back that Fifth Hour Hero broke up and that bummed me out. I like dramatic, female-fronted, poppy sweepers. Lemuria are thick with sensitive, sweatery, at-liberty

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with sorta-poetic lyrics which alternate between sweet to cloying. All in all, this teeters; wouldn't have minded a bit more of a stern stare down or two, or the removal of one ill-advised "drum solo." –Todd (Co-released: Art of the Underground, Whoa Oh, Yo-Yo)

ERGS!, THE: "Blue" b/w "Blew": 7"

I find comfort within The Ergs'! depth of musical geekdom. Not only is this their "Blue" release—much like the Adolescents' record—they have the Adolescents' ability to be much more than the sum of their parts; those parts being punk rock; those parts being rock in general; those parts being filtered by guys who could probably play in any type of band, but I'm stoked that they chose punk to be the point of their spear. No, they don't sound anything like the Adolescents, but that's the point. Original hearts beat differently. Original awesome, bubbly original (I guess blue is the new color of bubblegum), one Nirvana cover with song credit going to Sid Vicious' original name. I'm sliding the set list from the last show I saw them at in with the 7" right after I write this review. Go Ergs! –Todd (Toxic Pop)

ERGS!, THE:

Upstairs/Downstairs: CD

There's a band from New Jersey called The Nerds; they're a typical cover band, they play things like weddings and corporate events and your typical shore bars, and the shtick

is that they dress up in horn rimmed glasses and wear pocket protectors, while playing mostly various Top 40 hits from throughout the past few decades, like "WHOA, LOOK AT US. WE'RE TOTALLY DORKY, THAT'S NUTS, RIGHT?". I point this out, because I can't help but find it somewhat ironic that (and I mean this in the nicest way possible) The Ergs! have completely beaten "The Nerds" at their own game, so to speak. They're smart dudes, and they know and obsess over all things music. We know they've already nailed writing the quick, catchy, poppy punk love songs, but there's more proof here of just how talented they are (for example "Stinking of Whiskey Blues," as well as the brilliant title track [which may actually be my favorite Ergs! song ever]). And if that's not enough, they traveled all the way to the other side of the country just to record with Conrad Uno (and most likely demand to hear every little story he has), and with one of their favorite bands, to boot (you've heard of bringing your favorite band with you on tour? Yeah, they've upped the ante there too). I have no doubt in my mind that they could figure out a way to play music full time, be it by playing multiple sets at country and jazz bars every day, or becoming some lame ass cover band, but instead they keep putting out records like this, and playing great shows, and for that I am thankful. –Joe Evans III (Dirtnap)

ERGS!, THE:

Upstairs/Downstairs: CD

Wow, this record really snuck up on me. I'd been hearing a lot about the Ergs! around the Razorcake corporate compound (henceforth referred to as the Cake-Pound), so I was very excited to grab the review copy of *Upstairs/Downstairs* and proceeded to be disappointed... initially that is. I didn't think it was bad by any means, but it just seemed kinda middle of the road at first. Then around the third or fourth listen I realized I really liked it and many of the melodies had subconsciously worked their way into my head. The best way to describe it is pop punk that's mostly about girls with just the right amount of appealing nerdiness. My scientific proof of this looks like this: (((All+Jawbreaker)/Screeching Weasel)*Husker Du)Bouncing Souls)=Ergs! A lot of tracks stick out as possible favorites including "Your Cheated Heart," "2nd Foundation," "Bike Shop," and "Trouble in River City" but the undisputed king of the heap is "Books about Miles Davis." The song starts out with just vocals and a lightly distorted guitar and perfectly captures a feeling of stagnation before busting out in a perfectly timed catharsis of drums, bass, guitar, and backing vocals for about two measures before settling back down again. The album ends with the eighteen minute title track (a *Zen Arcade* reference perhaps?), which is surprisingly not too hard

listen to. The only misstep in the album is the countryish "Stinking of Whiskey Blues," which isn't a bad song so much as it throws off the album's flow with its place in the track listing. This is a fun album that makes it to my recommendation list. –Adrian Salas (Dirtnap)

EXPLODING HEARTS, THE:

Shattered: CD

This is a posthumous odds and sods collection from Portland's Exploding Hearts, which contains demos, unreleased songs, some singles, and alternate mixes of songs from *Guitar Romantic*. This assorted jumble makes for a surprisingly cohesive album. Basically, this is power pop of the highest order that conjures up the New York Dolls, The Pointed Sticks, and The Buzzcocks. Some of these songs like "I'm a Pretender" and "Throwaway Style" tap into some kind of universal melodiousness that just makes the songs seem like they should have always existed in the power pop canon, and initially had me thinking that the songs had to be T. Rex songs I've never heard. The slower version of "Teenage Kicks" on here is the best class of '77 anthem that's actually from the 21st Century. There's nary a foul turn to be found on this album, only sugary treats that hit with the spiky-sweet punch of Pop Rocks and soda. –Adrian Salas (Dirtnap)

Dustheads "Little Pieces"

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FAKE PROBLEMS:

Where Our Bodies Go: CD

This is the first CD in a long time that I've gotten for a review and liked enough to keep. If it were up to me, I'd call this "garage folk," with a crazy smorgasbord of influences (from Irish punk to ska to doo-wop to AC/DC) that really, really works. A little horn section here, a little fiddle there, and a lot of awesome all over. Folk-punk fans take note: Fake Problems could be your new favorite band if you let them. —Sarah Shay (Sabot)

FOR SCIENCE: Revenge for Hire: CD

I don't know if it's just because it's summer, but I've been listening to a whole lot more pop punk lately, and For Science has been firmly cemented in my rotation. Nothing too heady, full of songs about girls, and totally gives me instant gratification of a personal dance party every time I press play. —Megan (Don Giovanni)

FULL OF FANCY / THE ACID CREEPS: Split: 7" EP

Full of Fancy: A fine example of that brand of mellow college pop that gets changed four seconds after the drums kick in. "Whoah, Theodore" adds a little doo-wop lilt to the sound, but by then I had completely checked out. Acid Creeps: More college rock fodder. First tune is a fairly uninteresting rant whose only saving grace is it's loud. Second tune mellows things out a bit and shows some decent musicianship, but, again, ain't particularly interesting. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cutesville)

GEISHA GIRLS: Self-titled: 7"

I'm probably gonna get hate mail for this, no doubt most of it from the band, but "In the Monotone" reminds me of Robert Smith fronting a buncha dudes tripping on early U.K. post-punk. Don't get me wrong, the song is seriously fucking good, as is the Middle Class cover on the flip, but homeboy sounded like he was very much in touch with his inner Cure. —Jimmy Alvarado (Project Infinity)

GHETTO WAYS: The Party Bag: 7"

After listening to the Ghetto Ways—and bands in their camp as diverse as The River City Tanlines to The Detroit Cobras—is that, on one hand, they're comforting. I like old pre-cleaned-up rock'n'roll and soul: Sam Cooke, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chubby Checker, The Pinetoppers. And the Ghetto Ways instantly soak me back in that tub. It feels good. One the other hand, they just aren't just reheating covers (or songs that are, for all intents and purposes, covers with different song titles). They sound itchy, desperate, wailing, and ready to blow off any coffin lid people may want to heap dirt on top of, to fill up rock'n'roll's grave. Three great new songs. Feisty. —Todd (Wicked Singles)

GRABASS CHARELSTONS / ERGS!: Split 7"

Grabass: Sometime last year, I said, "Fuck it. I give up. No más." But then, when I can't sleep, I start thinking... what mechanisms make rafts of shitty

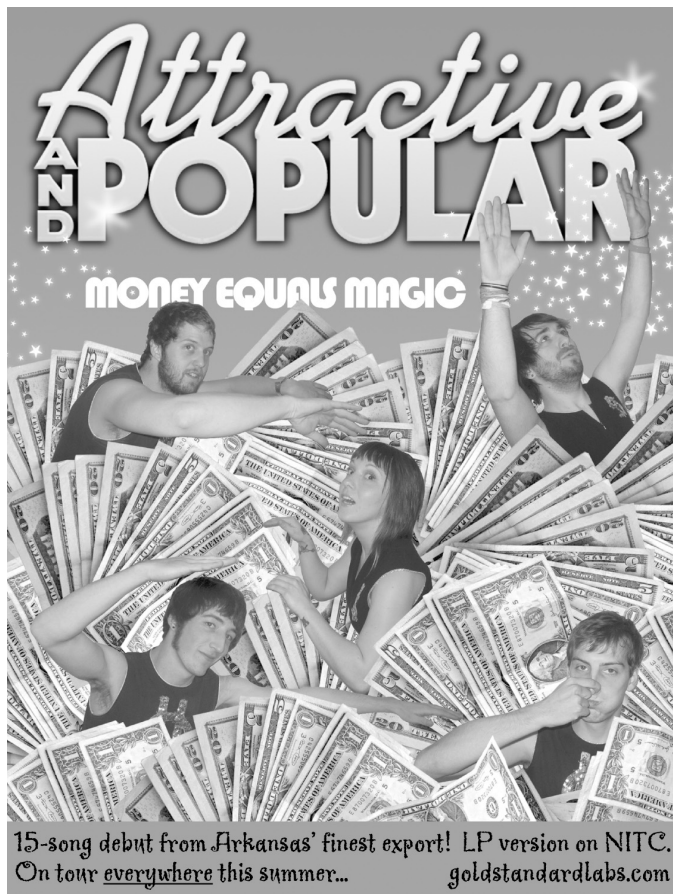
bands super popular while bands that I absolutely love—and plenty of people seem to dig, too—remain relatively obscure? The Grabass Charlestons are one of those bands. Two absolutely great songs—one about the world going to shit and that's why Will likes cats (infallible logic), and one about a dude who burned everyone in his wake. Is it because the drummer's the singer? (That worked for the Carpenters.) Is it because they don't pander to any sort of trend? (That worked for the Ramones.) They don't pander to any sort of scene? (That's working for the Ergs!) Conundrum. But the band doesn't seem to mind, so I'll stop here. Ergs!: On the flip side, a band that's getting its due. People are rightly amped up on them, as they show that pop punk isn't a terminal trajectory into a musical cul-de-sac. It's like looking at a fancy rock: durable as all hell and with slight twists, something new sparkles from them again and again. —Todd (No Idea)

HAPPY DEATH, A:

Letter to the Dead: CDEP

Here is something interesting I pulled off of Wikipedia: *A Happy Death (original title La mort heureuse) was the first novel by French writer-philosopher Albert Camus. The existentialist topic of the book is the "will to happiness," the conscious creation of one's happiness, and the need of time (and money) to do so. It draws on memories of the author including his job at the maritime commission in Algiers, his suffering*

from tuberculosis, and his travels in Europe. I'm not sure this was the band's reference in choosing a name, but it caught my attention. I was given this CD at a show a few months back from the singer/guitarist Rick. I had known that he had played in a few bands throughout the years, but I wasn't sure what this band would sound like. I knew it would definitely be punk based. I popped the CD in the player at home a few days later and the first track, "12:22," comes pouring out the speakers. Four clicks of the drum sticks lead to a thunderous bass line combined with almost a tribal use of drums. Slight harmonic guitar notes add a touch of emotion to that section of the song. Then the song powers ahead and the power chords are unleashed. I begin to hear Rick's vocals and they are delivered with a sound that is pained and desperate. I pull out the booklet and start to read the lyrics to the songs because, right from the start, I really like this song. I understand where this emotion is coming from. I had a few conversations with him about him losing his fiancé to an early death. This song is for her. Honest and open for all to hear. I listen to just this one song over and over while I have my player on repeat. It really moved me. I had a loss recently and it connects with me and is a sadness I can share. Musically, the song is progressive with punk energy, dark with a death rock gloominess, and post punk with its out of the box use of guitar layering. The other three



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tracks challenge the listener to pay attention and keep listening. They do not play off of one formula. Each song is unique and could be mistakenly perceived as being performed by different performers if played in a mix of other songs. Even though the songs are different from one another, it is an enjoyable package as a whole. But four songs become a tease. I want to hear more. Hoping that the band does not implode, I am in anticipation that a future full length is in the works. —Donofthedeath (Me and My Shadow)

HARA-KEE-REES, THE: *Can't Stop Thinking About You b/w I'm Walking Babes: 7"*

A quick glance at the cover—five Dutch dudes sporting sullen looks, black button-ups, and nooses—and you might think that something mighty unconventional was afoot, ala the Monks. Not quite. Most of the A-side is good, though unremarkable, post-"Psychotic Reaction" garage rock. Until they hit the break. Then the organ drops out, the guitar feeds back, the rhythm section keeps chugging along, and the singer goes through the chorus. That's when I picked up on the line "I can't stop dreaming about you"—that's a predicament of a whole different order. Can't stop thinking about that special someone? Think about baseball or *Weekend at Bernie's* or how to improve your stir fry skills; redirect your mind, bub, you can control your thoughts. But when that certain someone infects

your subconscious that's beyond your grasp. That merits serious empathy and it's the twist this tune needed to rise above. "I'm Walking Babe" reaches those heights much sooner by simply having the guitarist play on the one and three beats; a little offbeat dissonance is good for what ails you. —Mike Faloon (Kuriosa)

HIGH TENSION WIRES: *Midnight Cashier: LP*

Ever sat around in your undies and thought, "Huh, I wonder what Mike Wiebe of the Riverboat Gamblers would sound like with Mark, Mike, and Jeff of the Marked Men and Chris of the Reds?" I mean, they all live in the same geographic area. It's not that inconceivable; weirder shit like nanotechnology is afoot nowadays. Still in your underwear, think Buzzcocks and that smattering of non-ass, synthesizer-driven stuff in the '80s (go ahead and cherry pick some Jesus And Mary Chain, some Cure, Echo And The Bunnymen, a whisper of Bauhaus) on top of that, and bang, there you go. On one hand, it's pretty much what you'd expect (in the fact that it's great, tight, and instantly memorable and sounds a lot like the Marked Men), on the other hand—and I'd suspected this all along—that this is a group of folks with many more than one or two bunnies to pull out of their collective hats and they aren't afraid to roll that bunny up and throw the occasional curveball. —Todd (Dirtnap)

HISTORY INVADES: *Vision Vanish Invisible: CD*

After reading the press sheet and being prepared for something that would, "confront, contort, and confound your sense of what rock/punk/electronic music should be," I can say what this left me with was a sense of what rock/punk/electronic music shouldn't be. This is basically some heavily processed beats that have a bunch of equally heavily processed sounds and vocals going on all over the place, which adds up to hipster rave ambient music. I'm not against experimenting with punk rock because breaking outside the standard punk rock box can be absolutely inspiring (see Shellac, Nomeansno, The Minutemen, Slint, and The Locust, to name a few). This, on the other hand, sounds like some rejected Nine Inch Nails rhythm tracks overlaid with samples from Pure Moods CDs and some lazily drawled wannabe post-modern musings. To quote the press sheet again: "The word to name the sound isn't available..." On the contrary I think it is: boring. —Adrian Salas (Lujo)

HOMOSTUPIDS: *The Intern: CD*

I have been looking for that virgin feeling of hearing punk rock and hardcore for the first time. Being so pissed off and pent up at jocks and school and finally hearing raw guitar and drums, with some dude screaming lyrics of how I felt. Or at least screaming, so it felt right. Got that feeling back some from

the Regulations and the Fatahs, and now Homostupids is ripping it up for me. Pissed screaming, desperate guitars, song titles like "Dicksting" and "Apeshit," this band is ready to rumble. A few songs off their previous two, brutal 7"s, but mostly new songs and actually recorded pretty good, assuming they are in a cement bunker nowhere in Ohio. Get this and remember what the fuck you got into punk for in the first place. —Speedway Randy (Parts Unknown)

HOT NEW MEXICANS: *Wah...7"*

I like being confounded by music, yet enjoying it. It's like a taste that escapes memory, but lurks on the sides of your tongue. Hot New Mexicans do what The Carrie Nations' *Be Still* did (and still does) to me. Made me stop and think that indie rock's just in weak hands, the crowns have been sent to the wrong addresses. Diapers are full. Hot New Mexicans validate the theory that I really wasn't listening to latter Hüsker Dü wrong; that it wasn't just getting slower and needed sleepier (and infinitely more boring) interpretations, but by adding layers, tension, and depth there *can* be more to listen to. Much like Superchunk, with Hot New Mexicans I hear punk rockers unafraid to stretch their musical tastes without completely smothering that initial, unmistakable fire. Wow, this is good stuff and it's got pianos and "la, la, las" all without the usual attendant reek of hipsterism. —Todd (Fast Crowd)



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HUNCHBACK / THE TRASHIES:
Together at Last: Split 7"

The Trashies are a cool band I've been getting into lately—trashy rock descending from the Mummies and Supercharger vibe—a little bit cleaner but still a messed-up vital whack job sound. A quickie song, "Mongo Retardo" is awesome, and their cover of Supercharger's "Soup Prize Package" is great too. This is the first time I've heard Hunchback and it's a solid combo with the Trashies: plucky, dirty excitement with "Sixteen Tons" and a speedy cover of the Dead Kennedys' "Too Drunk to Fuck." A freaking fun 7". And on 33 rpm, passing that value on to you. Good ol' drinking, rooting tooting fun. —Speedway Randy (Freedom School)

I.C.U.: Self-titled: 7"

Mighty thrash punk from the folks that brought you Passout Record Shop. It seems nearly impossible that this much racket could be made by two people, a guitar, and some drums. Aerobitch made a similar noise with their LP in the mid-'90s, but there were five of them! The two original songs on side A are speedy and precise with flailing, brutal, Slayer-like drumming, while the cover of Pink Floyd's "See Emily Play" on side B rules so much it simply has to be heard to be believed. Recommended. —Josh Benke (Put-On)

ISOTOPES: Around the Horn b/w You Gotta Freeze: 7"

To appreciate this single on the surface, you need nothing more than an appreciation for the McRackins branch of the Ramones-core family tree. Yet you seek more—I can sense it—and if baseball-themed punk rock laced with *Simpsons* references (well, one anyway, the band's name is nicked from Springfield's local baseball team), this is your band. It's a perfect fit. The band's sound and look are an orthodox interpretation of the Ramones tradition and the Isotopes' lyrics are all about playing the game the right way—what to do after certain types of outs, how to run the bases—doing the little things right, following protocol. The mold has been cast, folks, work with it, or, as the Isotopes declare, "When I'm in the line-up you'll do it my way/Never shall the order be reversed." Johnny Ramone would be proud of the style and the substance. —Mike Faloan (Isotopes Punk Rock Baseball Club)

J CHURCH: The Horror of Life: CD

This is the hardest kind of CD to review because I want to like it more than I actually do, if that makes sense at all. It's full of nice, frantic punk songs with some well thought out lyrics (dig the songs about Eric Dolphy and Laika the cosmonaut dog), but at the end of the day I think the problem is that sixteen songs is just too much for this particular album. There's just not quite the

diversity of sound needed to carry interest through the whole album. While not wide-ranging in their sound, most of the songs are pretty good, except one that's just horrible. The song "We Play Secular Music" is just a huge turd in the middle of the CD that often manages to lose me for the rest of the album. It's the worst kind of bad song, which is one that actually manages to get stuck in your head. The song itself sounds like an off-key rant put to an annoying riff. Anyhow, trim five or six songs off this and it is very possibly a great album. As is this is an "it's okay." Also, my props go out to guitarist/singer/main song writer Lance Hahn for even putting this out, because after reading the press sheet I was surprised that he even was able to find the will to keep making music after all that he's been through. Kudos to you, sir. —Adrian Salas (No Idea)

JAMES CHANCE AND THE CONTORTIONS: Soul Exorcism Redux: CD

This is probably the greatest live album I've heard in two years. In 1980, James Chance was creating—along with Pere Ubu, Gang of Four, and Robert Quine—the most interesting music on the planet. (I remember someone involved in the late '70s N.Y. punk scene wrote, "James Chance was where punk should have gone." I agree.) For approximately three years, James Chance was infallible—a

key component of New York's no-wave scene (which spawned such luminaries as DNA—Tim Wright is still way too fucking underrated—and Lydia Lunch who collaborated with Chance often). James's girlfriend, Mudd Club founder Anya Phillips, was an integral part of Chance's music (and live show) and makes a rare appearance on this album (Phillips died of cancer less than a year after this recording). Heavily influenced by *The James Brown Show*, Phillips designed Chance's stage outfits and record sleeves (as well as set up gigs for Chance, etc.). This CD, containing tracks from a June 1980 Rotterdam, Holland show, is Chance at his most volatile, backed by such formidable musicians as Ornette Coleman bassist Al Macdowell and drumming prodigy Richie Harrison. *Soul Exorcism* catches Chance in his element: the stage—producing some of the most exciting, cerebral mixings of jazz with soul; both styles beaten black and blue by Chance's irreverence for conformity. Man, I'm looking at this CD right now and it has a sticker on it quoting positive reviews: "The Contortions shook the fuck out of raw funk!"—*Chicago Reader*; "...essential no wave/drug-funk/skree jazz..."—*Alternative Press*. These reviews are bullshit 'cause they completely miss the point of the Contortions. James Chance isn't essential no-wave; he didn't shake the fuck out of raw funk. James Chance literally was New York in

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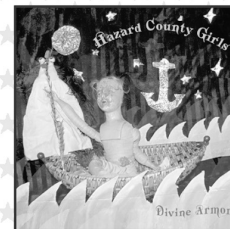
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1980; he was—along with three or four other bands and musicians—*music* in 1980. (When I opened my review box yesterday containing this record, my jaw dropped, followed immediately by an “Oh shit!”) Few had Chance’s balls or his erudition—the combination of punk’s Dadaist approach to conventions backed by some of the best musicians you’re ever likely to meet. (Television—although conceptually very different from Chance—also combined hyper-intelligence with amazing musicianship. The latter quite often missing in punk rock or whatever you want to call that stuff.) James Chance was one of those rare, intelligent human beings who loved something (Black American music—jazz, blues, soul) so much, he had to leave his own mark on it, had to produce his own interpretation of it. It’s these people who obliterate orthodoxies—jazz musicians like Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman and writers like Louis-Ferdinand Celine and Fyodor Dostoevsky—who keep me alive. Like a lot of pioneers, James Chance has faded away (he’s not doing so well these days), but his contributions are eternal. Listen to this CD and you’ll know what I’m talking about. —Ryan Leach (ROIR)

JOHN THE BAKER / MILLIONS OF DEAD COPS: *Unplugged: Split 7”*

Look, I fully recognize MDC’s place in our collective history, and I acknowledge that so much of their

lyrical output was based on sarcasm, *and* I’ll be the first to tell you that, generally, I’m a pretty uptight dude... but holy fuck, this is cruddy. Two songs by MDC, the first a sing-songy campfire ditty about killing cops sung by a nasally guy that I hope to shit is not Dave Dictor, the second a woefully overly dramatic cover of Agression’s “It Can Happen.” John The Baker doesn’t fare much better—two songs that sound like an angry grandpa groaning over his grandson’s instrumental attempts to sound like that slow Stone Temple Pilots song. I mean, the record *looks* beautiful (a screen-printed cover with Eric Drooker art), John The Baker contributes a pretty interesting insert about winning a case against the police in his hometown and eventually getting some fucked-up cops thrown off the force, and both of these dudes have been active contributors to the punk scene for a long time, but if I have to hear John the Baker screech “*The cops are fucking little girls!*” one more time I’m going to hurl. As a whole, the record’s just too hokey and poorly executed. —Keith Rosson (Tankcrimes)

KIETOLAKI: *Self-titled: 7” EP*

Nothing quite hits the spot like a solid dose of fjordcore and the contribution these kids make to Scandinavia’s long, rich history of shredding vocals and savage abuse of musical instruments is welcome. Three songs, “let’s get in there, lay waste to anything that moves,

then get the fuck out” song lengths, and a no-holds-barred attack; you really can’t ask for much more than that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Moo Cow)

KVOTERINGEN: *Bister Prognos: LP*

One side of new stuff and one of assorted 7” tracks from some very pissed-off Swedes who love their hardcore. What they don’t deliver in hyper-speed beats they dole out in sheer muscle. Limited to 200, so act fast, kids. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

MAD CADDIES: *Keep It Going: CD*

This CD has two sounds going on in it. The fast songs sound like demented circus sideshow ska punk with their quick paced, drunken, vaudevillian horn arrangements dancing around the guitars and... uh... banjo. The slower songs sound like Latin-inflected reggae lounge punk. And every so often a song has both the slow and fast parts happening. If KROQ could ever move past the year 1995, some of these songs could be played in place of Sublime without missing a beat. I dunno if ska is dead or not since I was only twelve or thirteen the last time it was around and alive according to some, but this is a really fun record that has some solid tunes nonetheless. I really enjoy the slower stuff like “Coyote” and “Riding for a Fall” because it’s good chill out music and the faster stuff like “Tired Bones” and “The Dirge” makes me want to ride a tilt-a-whirl. And we all know that only Grinches

and state safety inspectors don’t love tilt-a-whirls. —Adrian Salas (Fat)

MARGARET THRASHER: *Does It Matter?: 7”*

Razor sharp guitar and vocals that cut right through your skull with their content and delivery. It’s stuff like this that reminds me of why I love intelligent thrashy punk rock so god damn much. Clarence Thomas Records is definitely holdin’ down the fort. —Daryl (Clarence Thomas, www.Bistrodistro.com)

MARK SULTAN: *The Sultanic Verses: CD*

‘60s garage rock breaks into the empty house and party in a one-man band. The “let’s rock” vibe is in full effect here, where his albums with King Khan have a little more diversity from slow to fast, and his album with The Mind Controls is faster garage. Here its bop bop bop guitar, hand claps, sweet singing and lyrics, as catchy as it gets. Sure it’s a lot of a one thing, and part of me wants to say this is straight ahead and seems like lots of bands could do this, but fuck, where are they?! As opposed to a band with two good songs and filler, Sultan is consistently good—with a ton of great songs. On top of that, he has released X number of records the past couple of years as BBQ or The Mind Controls and all have been great after repeated listens. I’m starting to swear by him. —Speedway Randy (In The Red)



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MARK SULTAN:**The Sultanic Verses: CD**

SO YOU KNOW: MARK SULTAN IS BBQ OF KING KAHN AND BBQ FAME. *Sultanic Verses* is Sultan's first solo album (to the best of my knowledge); it sounds similar to his material with King Kahn And BBQ. If you're down with BBQ's earlier stuff—and consider yourself a dogmatic fan of “garage rock”—you might not like *Sultanic Verses*: it's got eclecticism—more overt leanings on rhythm and blues, soul, and rockabilly—and wit in abundance—songs a bit more sophisticated than Dutch ovening your dead girlfriend. I'm quite smitten with *Sultanic Verses* and consider it exponentially superior to the myriad of other albums Sultan has played on (check Grunnen Rocks for a complete list). Look, I'll be honest with you—unless you're Hasil Adkins or Bradley Williams, that one-man band shit is stupid. I'd hate Sultan—his entire output with Kahn—had it not been so fucking apparent from the get-go that the man has a real fucking knack for writing songs. The shortcomings of Kahn And BBQ are apparent; the frustration palpable as the listener ponders how great a track like “Why Don't You Lie” (off of Kahn And BBQ's *What's for Dinner*) would sound with a bass line and a little more TLC in the studio. So thank God Sultan invited a few more friends into the studio for *Sultanic Verses*, spent a little more

time rounding out his songs. I'm too lazy to go through a track-by-track rundown on this album, but I'll tell you this: Sultan effortlessly combines Bill Haley's rockabilly, the Velvet's drone, Rosie and the Originals' doo-wop, and Eno's thirst for the avant-garde on *Sultanic Verses*; quite often grouping all these styles on one track.... “Mortal Man” might be the best track Sultan's recorded to date; “Unicorn Rainbow Odyssey” is part Whyte Boots, part ‘72 Brian Eno.... *Sultanic Verses* will probably be one of the top five albums released this year. —Ryan Leach (In the Red)

MEASURE [SA], THE: Old Crow: 7”

This is as good a place as any: you may notice that The Measure [SA] are the cover band this issue. Why? Because they're—in my opinion—one of the best, active DIY punk bands going right now. That's it. No focus groups. No mystery. No advertising dollars to consider for placement. No Soundscan. No “how many units? What's their market?” silliness that “drives the economy.” Phooey to all that slippery slope, glossy expectation. Their LP is great and their first 7” completely blew me away. The songs are touching while still rollicking. They have their hearts on their sleeves, brains in their heads, and fire in their hearts. They also seem, to me, to be a band that fulfills the promise, that—at the very least—the underground can produce the best music on the planet if you

listen close enough. The Measure [SA] are like pure thrill at the same time your heart breaks... with beavers. —Todd (Los Diapers, www.myspace.com/losdiaperrecords)

MODERAT LIKVIDATION:**Never Mind the Bootlegs, Here's the Real Deal: CD**

Have you seen the prices of what people are paying on Ebay for old records these days? It's insane. I'm not sure what the prices are for early '80s Swedish punk, but I know it definitely is out of my price range. This is a complete discography of their first 7” and two cassettes that were reissued as three 7”s and a special wood box set of the same records that sold out super quick. This is early '80s Swedish punk that is raw and powerful at the same time: a sound that can't be replicated in the modern age of digital recording. I remember when my brother started getting records from all over the world and hearing what was out there. You can hear that there were punks all over the world who were as pissed as we were. But you can hear that they were not copying; they were doing it their own way. Many others have said it before, but I am grateful that people are reissuing so many of these gems that could be lost in the hands of the collectors. If this interests you, I also suggest tracking down a copy of the three-CD set titled *Varning for Punk*. It is like a history lesson of early '80s Swedish

punk compiling material from over forty bands. —Donofthedeath (Havoc)

MOJOMATICS, THE:**Songs for Faraway Lovers: CD**

My first taste of this Italian two-piece, their *Nothin' About Nothin' 7”*, remains my favorite. Take Americana—folk, roots, hillbilly, blues—light a too-short fuse and have it almost explode in your hands and that's what that little slab reminded me of. You knew what'd happen, but it was closer to danger and faster than expected. (Two elements in music I admire.) This full-length doesn't slouch, but it's different and not as compulsive listening. It's “sexier.” Slower paces. More Beatles. More porch time instead of standing on their tip-toe toes and rock-lobbing. In conclusion, an excellent evening-winding-down record instead of the “get out some sharp scissors ‘cause we're about to cut a rug” collection of songs. Not exactly what I was hoping for, but definitely not bad. —Todd (Alien Snatch)

MURDER BY GUITAR: On Parade: CD

I sleep a little better at night knowing that the void in my life caused by Billy Childish only releasing a few records each year—instead of, like, a couple dozen, which was the case maybe fifteen or so years ago—is being so capably filled by Martin Savage, who turns up in a new band of Stockholm garage sensations pretty much every pay period these

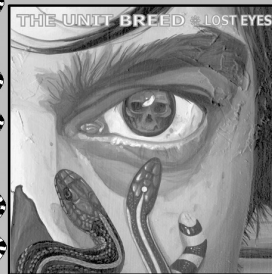
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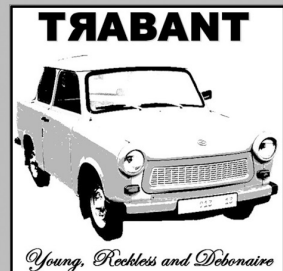
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days. Things adhere pretty much to the standard M. Savage blueprint—sparse, thin, forceful, and garagey—with the defining characteristic being a certain observance of late-'70s post-punkish song structure infecting the guitar/guitar/drums/occasional Casio base coat. The dude doesn't make too many bad records, so, please, consider a trip to the buffet lest you waste away to nothing and be unable to fulfill your conjugal duties as a result. **BEST SONG:** "There's a Murder Going On" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "There's a Murder Going On" I guess **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** "Tracy" is not the Cuff Links song. That's a pretty lame Fantastic Amazing Trivia Fact, but we all need to tighten our belts a little these days. —Rev. Nørb (Human Audio)

NIGHT TERRORS: Cobras: CD

Usually bar rock is a slam on a band, but here it's a compliment. If you are in a bar and it's not party time at midnight, but 5:00 trying to forget work and girls, you might want Night Terrors on the jukebox. It would shove the other citizens out. Dark rock, moody at times, gravel voice, but still rawwwk with heavy guitars and some speed (pun intended). And what do you know, it's a Milwaukee combo led by Tony Sagger and Kevin Mistreater, so, duh, it sounds like their other bands mashed together with hops and whey. —Speedway Randy (Big Neck)

NOBUNNY: Nobunny Cares: CD-R

I believe in Nobunny. He appears to feel The Rock strongly. That is all. **BEST SONG:** "I Can't Wait" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Chuck Berry Holiday" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** This is a hand-numbered CD-R in a limited edition of fifty...and, according to the back cover graphics, released by Slash Records! Obviously a project so elite in the "Slash Homemade" series that not even Slash is aware of it! —Rev. Nørb (Nobunny)

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS / DUKES OF HILLSBOROUGH: Split 7"

Everything except the first and last sentences of this review is a lie. Both bands kill on Protools. Geddy Lee and Neal Pert would totally be jealous. Hear that triangle counterbalancing the cow bell? Fuckin'-a, dude, it snaps! **Dukes of Hillsborough:** More songs about how everything's okay, all people are essentially decent and caring, but dogs really suck. Oh, and work totally rules. Especially the great pay and the creativity and dignity it provides the working class. **Off With Their Heads:** More songs about if we all pray, America will win the war, Christianity is the only sensible choice, and gas prices will eventually go down if more Arabs are killed. And that Ryan's latest book, *I Love You, Me, Everybody*, has become a best seller. Knew exactly what I was getting into, it was delivered, and it made me happy. —Todd (ADD)

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS / PRACTICE: Split 7"

Off With Their Heads: Their music sounds like an icy, gruff-mouthed, Dillinger Four-friendly odes. Lots of punch—cold-packed fists that swing with a lot of weight—and the lyrics are the exact opposite of love songs; pretty much every one's a *loathe* song (self, you, other people, lady standing behind you, entire parts of the country, girlfriend from ten years ago), and it works really well. When the keyboard kicks in on the second song, I get the feeling OWT's capable of a lot of depth in those inky black wells they call their hearts. **Practice:** There's something in the Pacific Ocean. Has to be. Because from here to Japan, a band playing a mix of the Jam, Clash, and Elvis Costello, sounds like they're playing with newly discovered, just-cut pieces to a puzzle that snaps together crisply. Tell me, Japan: how does that happen, almost thirty years after the fact? This should be played out to dust, but it's there, jumping around and I want to jump around with it. Nice cover of the Descendents' "Silly Girl," to boot. —Todd (Snuffy Smiles)

ONES, THE: Self-titled: CD

Egads, Meatloaf would be in trouble if he wasn't already, you know, Meatloaf. —Megan (Waxvaccine)


PAUL COLLINS BEAT:

Flying High: CD

While I can still tell you how much I paid for the first Beat (there is only

ONE "The Beat," and they are NOT ENGLISH) album in the Fall of 1979 (\$4.59 + tax at Pipe Dreams), let the record show that the second album was spotty and the mini-LP was pretty bad, so why exactly anybody anywhere thinks we need to call what's more or less a Paul Collins solo album a Paul Collins Beat album a quarter century after the fact is well beyond my comprehension. I mean, fuckin'-A, this isn't a Beat album! This is some singer/songwriter dude ((who lives in Spain now, apparently)) calling a few friends over to back him up on some hope recording project! Most of these songs aren't Beat-ish in the least—"Rock 'n' Roll Shoes" certainly ain't gonna make anyone forget "Rock 'n' Roll Girl," that's for DAMN sure—so I fail to grasp the compulsion to brand this The Beat at anything other than a marketing level. Hell, "Paco and Juan" is blatant Dire Straits emulation, why didn't they just call it "Mark Knopfler's Beat" and be done with it? The greatest tragedy (I think) is that I can hear a few of these songs—"Helen" or even the slower "More Than Yesterday"—in my head, as REAL Beat songs, recorded and produced a la 1979, all snappy and punchy and rockin' and what-not—as opposed to being played all laid back in some dude's living room, with brushes on the snares and crap. Bah humbug. The second half of the record descends into a surfeit of balladry, exposing the fact that Mr. Collins' once nasal, reedy and

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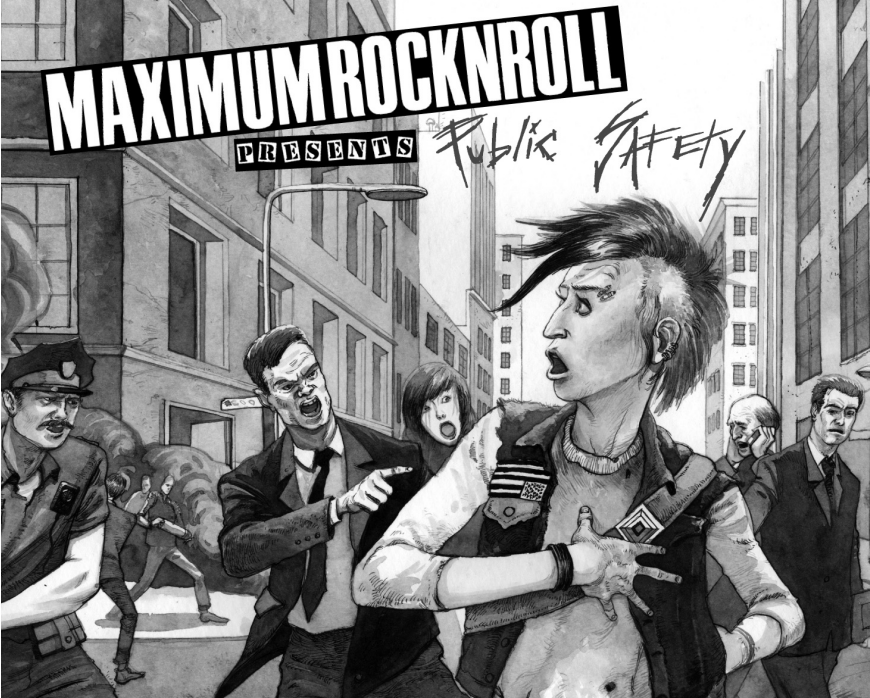
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punchy voice has wound up a sort of half-hoarse lounge croak, which is sad for all parties concerned. At the end of "Rock 'n' Roll Shoes," he ends by singing "You got the beat! You got the beat!" Uh, no. We don't. BEST SONG: "Helen" BEST SONG TITLE: "Rock 'n' Roll Shoes" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I forgive the fact that Paul appears to want to rhyme "guitar" with "Connecticut" in the song "Bobby," because I like that song. —Rev. Norb (Get Hip)

PETS, THE: *Let's Go: 7"*

The pile of power pop bands has been growing at a rapid and disturbing rate as of late. Reissues of material by the Fast Cars and Pointed Sticks have lead scores of skinny twenty-somethings to purchase Rickenbackers and try their hands at writing hook-laden, mid-tempo songs that would make Eric Carmen proud. Some are successful, most come off looking and sounding like gigantic pussies. The Pets fall into the successful category and are at the absolute top of the power pop heap. This single, their fourth (fifth?) and best, continues their string of highest quality pop releases. Good time music that will put a smile on your face. The Pets knack for writing deceptively simple pop tunes is rivaled only by the Fevers. If songs this good and "easy" were so simple to write, how come more bands can't do it? Party single of the summer! —Josh Benke (Douchemaster)

PINK FITS: *Don't Ask Why: CD Single*

The opening chords to "Don't Ask Why" are cribbed from the Mummies "Shake!" the vocal lead-in "aaahhh-aaahhh-aaahhh-AAAHHH!!!" from the Beatles "Twist and Shout," and the cymbals crash roughly forty-six times per second. It's wild garage rock from Wollongong and will send you into epileptic hysteria if you go for this kind of thing. The Pink Fits music will get yer ass off the barstool and onto the dance floor, plugging the top of your bottle of beer, shaking it recklessly, and watching the foam squirt all over every other dancer around you. Song number two on this CD single comes from none other than the aforementioned Mummies, a cover of their version of "Just One More Dance." I could see myself falling down drunk and dancing with a hot girl to the Pink Fits at a future Budget Rock Festival. —Josh Benke (Outback R'N'R)

PINK RAZORS: *Self-titled: 7"*

I like to make up games to play with myself. The latest is seeing if I can straighten my bedroom before this three-song record ends. Will a receipt on the floor distract me? Will the needle lift up before the last song ends? I usually get too amped up on these guys' Dillinger 4-ish pop punk to focus on much save for pacing the apartment, speaking gibberish at the cat. The recording here is a little rougher than that on their latest full-length, which adds some

much-appreciated grit to their sharp, melodic sounds. Also, they might be playing a tad slower, or maybe the 7" format allows the listener to focus on the individual tracks, but I am also detecting an element of British punk like Stiff Little Fingers here. New game: can I write an objective review of my friends' band? —CT Terry (Rorschach)

POTENTIAL JOHNS, THE:

Self-titled: 7"

Here's the secret. Jeff Burke—many of you may be familiar with him being a vocalist and guitarist in the Marked Men—is a prodigy, a shy, unassuming, and humble guy. And, over the years (these songs are from '96 and '03), he's gone into the studio (his own, I believe) and made recordings of his music. He plays every instrument, tracks them, mixes them as an exercise, keeps the tapes, and had no desire to ever release them until Justin of the Chinese Telephones convinced him otherwise. If I didn't tell you any of that and played the 7", you'd say, "Todd, fuck you. It's some Marked Men I haven't heard yet." And, in a way, you'd be right because this is one of the many secret backbones to one of the best bands going right now. I suggest you hunt this little guy down. Might as well get the Potential Johns / Chinese Telephones split LP when you're at it. Just trying to be helpful. —Todd (Sandwich Man)


PREACHER'S SON, THE:

Princes of the Kingdom: CD

Combining the Gun Club's appealing sordidness with the swagger and charm of Gram Parsons, The Preacher's *Princes of the Kingdom* is a refreshing addition to a genre Gabriel Hart (Starvations, Fortune's Flesh) has been building in Los Angeles; and to a smaller degree, a sound the Deadly Snakes in Canada tinkered with before their demise last year. Everything is here—American music: Doc Pomus, Lightnin' Hopkins, Jeffrey Lee Pierce; American literature: Carson McCullers, Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor. It's drunk, it's dirty; The Preacher's Son is about sin and redemption. It's no coincidence these happen to be some of my favorite topics...A brief highlight in an otherwise dismal sea of uninteresting music. —Ryan Leach (Mule Blood)

PROTESTANT: *Self-titled: 7"*

Protestant play hardcore punk that frequently crosses into grind and sludge territories. The tempo changes are done really well and never feel hokey. The packaging on this 7" is really interesting. It's silver ink screened on black construction paper, but it's a single piece of paper 18" x 12" and is folded in a way that holds the record well and offers a quite innovative layout. If you like your punk heavy, this is a quality release that won't leave you feeling like you just bought the same 7" you've bought many a times before. —Daryl (Halo of Flies)



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PTERODACDUDES / SHRED SAVAGE: Split: 7"

Do you need some party back in your punk? Look no further my festivity-deficient friend. Both these bands offer super high quality rockin' rollin' guitar-rippin' punk rock in the drunkest/highest, stinkiest sense of the word (which is pretty fucking drunk and stinky.) No release has ever made me chant "soar" quite like this one. -Daryl (Small Pool)

QUEERS, THE: Beat Off: CD

My third favorite Queers record has been remixed and re-released on Asian Man! (*Love Songs for the Retarded* and *Don't Look Back* are just a bit better.) If you already have this record, here's an excuse to get a fresh copy, and if you don't own it, you should, so pony up the cash. Essentially the same as the original Lookout! release, but it also includes a good Angry Samoans cover as the closer. Ben Weasel has also contributed some significant and insightful liner notes regarding the spirit and the persona of the Queers, a welcome addition to the package. A great record made even better. -The Lord Kveldulfr (Asian Man)

QUEERS, THE: Grow Up: CD

I know the Queers are a punk rock institution, and I know that this being a reissue of their first full length should probably make it a classic, but no matter how much I listen to it, nothing sticks out other than "Goodbye California," and "Burger

King Queen." Those two songs are great chunks of pop punk goodness. The rest just feels like non-descript Ramones-core, and that's that I love the Ramones. As a bonus on the reissue, there are also five demo songs on here that were partially engineered by Jimmy Miller, who apparently worked with the Rolling Stones at some point. The highly entertaining liner notes actually talk about that a lot, among other stuff. The only song on here that I would actually say is bad is "Gay Boy," which is plodding and listless (and on here in two versions). If "Goodbye California" and "Burger King Queen" were a single, I would call it a classic, but as a whole this album is pretty much take it or leave it for me. -Adrian Salas (Asian Man)

QUEERS: Don't Back Down: CD

Although once a huge fan of the Queers—their *Kicked out of the Webelos* EP remains, in my estimation, one of the unsung greats of '80s punk rock, and their *Grow Up* and *Love Songs for the Retarded* albums of the early '90s are must haves for any fans of Ramones-derived pop punk—this was the last album I heard by them that I had any real interest in. Part of it was the fact that the subsequent releases I heard were not particularly interesting or good, but a good chunk of it was also because of the inundation of clone bands that were an unfortunate byproduct of their popularity and the chronic herd mentality of so many so-called "free thinking" punks. I

freely admit they had no control over the latter, but I do feel that they would've more than easily secured a lofty place in punk's hall of fame if they had packed up the tent and went home after this release. Going one step beyond their heroes the Ramones and actually incorporating into their sound the Beach Boys influence Joey and the boys only hinted at, The Queers managed a rock solid release of smart-assed attitude, catchy hooks, and solid delivery. The Beach Boys influence goes so far in places—check out the title track and their cover of "Little Honda"—that the mind reels with wonder why Brian Wilson never dropped Joe a call to collaborate on something. If anyone ever asks why these guys were such a big deal, steering them in the direction of this CD wouldn't be a bad idea. -Jimmy Alvarado (Asian Man)

RADIO BIRDMAN: Zeno Beach: CD

Colossal return to action from these Aussie legends. Deniz Tek, Rob Younger, and Chris Masuak are joined by Russell Hopkinson (You Am I) on drums, Jim Dickson on bass, and Pip Hoyle on keys. There's not a weak track to be found here. But "We've Come So Far (To Be Here Today)" and "If You Say Please" are a couple that won't vacate my cranium anytime soon. Go see them live if they come your way, and get this CD 'cause it really shreds. -Sean Koepenick (Yep Roc)

REALITY:

Singles and More 1982-1984: LP

This collection of singles, demos, and live tracks charts the remarkable transformation of this obscure band's sound from generic Crass-influenced anarcho-punk to a more sophisticated post-punk sound. The latter stuff literally shimmers in contrast to their uninteresting beginnings and I'm wholly surprised "Who Killed the Golden Goose" didn't take them to the top of the U.K.'s indie charts back in the '80s. -Jimmy Alvarado (Rockin' Bones)

RED DONS, THE:

Escaping Amman: 7"EP

Unmistakably a continuation of The Observers. Doug Burns, the chief songwriter and voice of the band, is involved in two new bands, the Red Dons and The Revisions. The good news—if that Observers itch of yours needs some serious scratching—these are the fingers that'll do it. The songwriting's impeccable—catchy, jumpy, bright—and the songs are in league with anything The Observers recorded. (Crib notes that don't do the band justice: think Adverts, Youth Brigade, and instantly classic.) The bad news? I'm no technical music guy, but something along the way put some invisible pantyhose in this recording that stretches between the needle and the vinyl. It sounds a little distant, a little muted and off, and it's distracting enough for me to prevent giving it a whole-hearted thumbs up. -Todd (Deranged)

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RETURNABLES, THE:

Self-titled: CDEP

There is something intangibly Chicago-sounding about the Returnables. I can't quantify or explain it, but it's there, the same buzzing, energetic undercurrent that made Naked Raygun and Pegboy so memorable. This CD collects four studio and three live tracks from 2005, and illustrates how fantastic this band was at writing catchy power pop tunes. And when I say catchy, I mean the kind of songs that get stuck in your head and are impossible to pick out, like a gob of chewing gum in a little kid's hair. "What Would Mother Say" and "Teenage Imposter" are would-be smash hits that call to mind the Replacements and the mighty Firestarter. The singer's low, Quaalude drawl sways to and fro on the studio tracks, but is betrayed by blasts of emotion and energy on the live cuts. Having these guys on a bill in the late '70s with the Fast Cars would have been brilliant, were time travel possible and all that. Tragedy struck the Returnables in July of 2005 when their singer was killed in freak automobile accident, which is too bad for a number of reasons, not the least of which is it cut short the life of a fantastic band. —Josh Benke (Dirtnap)

RINGERS: *Detention Halls*: CD

Although I liked their first release enough, *Detention Halls* blows it out of the water. With a sound that's both more indescribably Boston

and more than a little Bent Outta Shape (who the Ringers played with a whole bunch before BOS called it quits), they're sounding like a more confident version of what they were (and still very much are). With lyrics about looking for your own name in the obituaries and watching all the buses driving in the opposite direction you're headed (a feeling I'm all too familiar with), it's surprising how upbeat it leaves me feeling. Great album. —Megan (1-2-3-4 Go!)

RINGERS: *Detention Halls*: CD

I swear, this may sound like it has a back hand to the compliment, but there isn't one. Okay, Bent Outta Shape, I'll say it. They broke up to soon. I have no why idea—nor do I care about—how the band imploded, but I thought they were on the verge of flat-out greatness. So, like with when the space shuttle exploded, right, there were these huge chunks falling back to earth? Ringers caught, refurbished, and re-launched one of Bent Outta Shape's fallen chunks of musical missile. Tell me "Nothing to Show" doesn't owe more than a passing blush to "Solitary Now." Now, here's the weird part. Fuckin' go for it, Ringers. Take that baton (with that Rancid O ring). Run with it. Bent Outta Shape stumbled, broke up, kaput. It's your turn in the relay to run that year 2000+ torch of the Replacements/Hüsker Dü/good music/Leatherface up the stairs, and, I, for one, am cheering you on

because it sounds like you've found your legs. What an infectious album. —Todd (1-2-3-4 Go!)

SAHUA: *Arm a Ghetto*: CDEP

Full disclosure up front: I've been friends with both Tito and Billy (Sahua's vocalist/rhythm guitarist and bassist, respectively) for more than half my life (and did time in Plain Agony, Los Traviesos and Ollin with one, the other or both) and remember when their lead guitarist (and Tito's son) Michael was but a few days old. Does that bias me favorably towards their music? Maybe, but my affinity for their musical efforts (Tito was singer for the legendary Chainsaw Blues, which changed its name to The Fingers and became a trash punk institution; and Billy has been in tons of off-kilter L.A. punk acts, including Trash Can School, Aphrodesian Heads, and Jazz from Hell, to name a few) has always been an honest one. Both have much in their past of which they can be proud, and this latest venture is no exception. As illustrated by both the sly appropriation of the cover layout of the Circle Jerks' *Group Sex* and the drawing of a gun-toting Virgen de Guadalupe inside, they incorporate non-punk influences amassed over the years into a punk sound and come up with something decidedly different in approach and content from the slew of vapid pop punkers whoring for the elusive big money label deal. From the outset, the music is a rough and tumble ride of

both subtle experimentation with form and primal thud-punk reminiscent of proto-hardcore bands like the Cheifs and The Klan, while the poetic lyrics address the use of fear as a tool for population control, the appropriation of religious imagery, fascism, police brutality, and the plight of both the poor in southern Mexico and the hundreds of murdered women in northern Mexico. Though some of the songs may run a little on the long side, the strongest of the five tracks here is the longest, "Sheriff's Gonna Die," which pulses with righteous anger and recounts a bleak reality many of us know too well: "Count the black and whites/Count the flashing lights/Chasing cars at night/Better run the end is near/Believe in what you hear/The force the rounds are here/To knock your voice down." All told, this is some good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.myspace.com/sahua13)


SAINTS, THE: *Imperious Delirium*: CD

New record from the punk rock legends. There's no "I'm Stranded" here, but some great songs throughout. I'm guessing they are down to a trio again since Marty Willson-Piper of The Church has flown the coop after one release. Chris Bailey carries all the guitar parts quite well without him. Amazing how cohesive this sounds considering it was recorded in Amsterdam! "Other Side of the World" could be a radio hit if the radio didn't just play shit all the time. —Sean Koeppenick (Cadiz)

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SCREAMIN' CYN CYN AND THE

PONS: *Screamin' Target Heart Rate*: CD
Whoa. This album blew me away. Looking at the band's name and the cover art I thought it might be some overly ironic hipster garbage. But no! This is actually a collection of hilarious, clever, pop punk songs (and lots of them! Twenty tracks!) performed with an almost alarming amount of energy and skill. My favorite track on the whole thing is the pro-dance, anti-standing-around anthem "Rock Your Body," which includes the line "Get on the floor/turn off the emo-core." If my aerobics teacher had taste, this is what she would play during class. —Jennifer Whiteford (Crustacean)

SEVERED HEAD OF STATE:

Power Hazard: LP

These guys mete out some great hardcore here that sounds rooted in the metallic wing of the celebrated U.K.82 tradition while managing not to sound a whit like the hordes of "drunk punx" who profane said tradition with endless tirades on the glory of hops and generic calls for rebellion. Eight tunes here, all pitch perfect, heavy and worth a listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (Havoc)

SHORT ATTENTION:

Clever, Maddening, Annoying: 7"

A novelty? Maybe. Novel? Definitely. Short Attention is a pop punk super group that plays extremely short, yet surprisingly catchy, songs. On this

7" there are twenty-six originals, two Chixdiggit covers and a Velvet Underground adaptation. It contains members of the Ergs!, the Unlovables, Dirt Bike Annie, Slaughterhouse Four, and the Steinways. This is the record you go for when you can't decide which song to put next on the mix tape. There are so many different songs with different topics and levels of seriousness you're bound to find one that fits. I even have a sneaking suspicion that's what they were going for, too. If you are fanatical about any of these members' other bands, you need this. If you are just a fan, this would be fun to have. And if you don't really care about pop punk, then just keep on doin' what you're doin', you silly bastard. —Daryl (Cold Feet)

SICK SICK BIRDS:

Chemical Trains: 7" EP

Members of The Thumbs playing post punk that's arty, yet still rocking, somewhat in the vein of Hot Snakes. This EP's a little mellowier, but still a great listen. It doesn't do them justice live though (again, not meant as a put down of the recording, so much as an endorsement of having seen them a few times now). As they say in their native Baltimore, "Recommended as a chicken". —Joe Evans III (Toxic Pop)

SICK SICK BIRDS:

Chemical Trains: 7" EP

Since I often think that six years ago was last weekend (not out of

nostalgia but from concussions), my memories of the Thumbs are still fresh. The Sick Sick Birds are like the natural progression of The Thumbs, if the Thumbs had been recording since the time of their disbanding, had released three more records, and loosely followed the trajectory of those type of bands that started out real fuckin' fast, but when they slowed down showed that there were songs buried under the roar the entire time; and that's what made the listens repeated. (I mean, who knew when *Land Speed Record* was released that a song like "Everything Falls Apart" was going to come from Hüsker Dü?) Anyhow, the Sick Sick Birds take their time and populate these well-constructed houses of songs and, yeah, it's mellowier, but it sounds like their house from foundation to roof, not a house from the past they're merely tourists in, scavenging cheap souvenirs from their past. —Todd (Toxic Pop)

SIGNAL LOST:

Prosthetic Screams: LP

Signal Lost got it all together for this release. It's like the bringing together of the storm from all these little pieces: the artwork, the recording, and most importantly, the songs seem to etch fresh, new tattoos on their body of work. I don't know if this makes sense, but *Prosthetic Screams* sounds like an interpretation of L.A.'s early '80s deathrockers Super Heroines via

modern DIY European hardcore band like La Fraction. There's that nice, dark ethereal quality backed by a modern crunch, fight, and crispness. It's both foreboding and forceful. Both dark, yet defiant. Great stuff. Makes me imagine that this would be one of Edgar Allan Poe's favorite bands if he were alive today. —Todd (Prank)

SIRENS, THE: *More Is More*: CD

Note to glam bands that suck: This is how not to suck. Although I'd like to hear the group take a whack at an original song or two, covering three Chapman-Chinn era Sweet songs, a pair of tunes off the MC5's "Back In The USA" album, the Hollywood Blondes and a generally overlooked Slade gem ("Rock & Roll Preacher," fuck yes) is not a bad way to go, especially when you toss in the fact that I'm not familiar with a bunch of the songs they're covering (gasp!), rendering them *de facto* originals for all intents and purposes. Any band that covers more than one song I have on my jukebox is obviously worthy of intense veneration, so venerate away, masses, or they'll suspect you just haven't got a clue what to do and you will be summarily killed with a wink of their eye. So it is written. BEST SONG: "Rock 'n' Roll Preacher" BEST SONG TITLE: "1-2-3-4 Rock & Roll" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Saturday Night" IS the Bay City Rollers song. Contrast

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with Venus review. **FANTASTIC AMAZING CODPIECE:** Malarsh. —Rev. Nørb (MuSick)

SKATE KORPSE: Limited: LP

Like skate punk pioneers JFA, these guys mix up the thrashin' with liberal doses of surf music. They also manage to eke out a very unique sound for themselves, which automatically earns them "cool" points for taking an influence and running with it rather than just aping the tried and true. Apparently they're now but a memory, and we're the worse for it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Punks Before Profits)

SMD: The Devil Makes Me Do It: CD

Wow, what a difference a few years make. Last thing I heard from these guys was a CDs-worth of boozy, good natured, but ultimately nondescript hardcore. This disc, however, demonstrates a marked improvement light years from that earlier release, with tempos ratcheted way the fuck up, more thoughtful lyrical content, and the introduction of a bit more metal in the geetars. The result recalls the glory days of metallic L.A. punk bands like Bloodcum, Pig Children, and others who managed to toss a lead into the mix without sacrificing the "core" in "hardcore." Calling this impressive would be an understatement. —Jimmy Alvarado (Six Weeks)

SMOKE OR FIRE:

This Sinking Ship: CD

Second album from this band out of Richmond, VA. Continuing on with

their melodic obsession and pro production that you get with Fat, I'm really surprised that this band has not been snapped up in a bidding frenzy by the majors. Songs that sound like a cleaner Rise Against mixed with some Anti Flag, they would market well to the melodicore set. The songs are catchy and could easily be recognized as being commercial. They have a knack of finding a melody that makes their music palatable. Added this time around is Dave Atchison the former drummer of From Ashes Rise, to replace their drummer who they parted ways with. Coming from a band like that, it only could be good. He adds a solid punch to the music. With their constant touring, I could only see them gaining an ever-growing fan base. —Donofthedeath (Fat)

SPARKLE MOTION: Self-titled: CD

Dear Sparkle Motion, I think I love you. I love you because you have made an album of eleven excellent pop punk tracks, most of which clock in under three minutes. I love you because you manage to remind of some of my favorites of yore, namely Bikini Kill and Babes in Toyland, and yet you don't sound derivative or boring. And wow, I love the sweet, sneery harmonies on songs like "Resortaphobia" and "Meltdown." But most of all I love you because I listened to this CD over and over again while I painted four coats of a color called "Lemon Tart" on my kitchen walls and it kept

me from going crazy from fumes and monotony. —Jennifer Whiteford (Super Secret)

STABBED IN BACK:

A Portrait of Noise: CDEP

This is four tracks of fast, melodic, and pissed-off hardcore of the non-metal variety that has more in common with 7 Seconds, Kill Your Idols, and Paint It Black then Metallica or Megadeth. I like this, but I can't get over the fact that these guys sound exactly like New Mexican Disaster Squad. This is really ironic because Stabbed In Back are actually from Albuquerque New Mexico (Home state pride! WHOOT WHOOT!!!), while New Mexican Disaster Squad are from Orlando, Florida. Maybe a name swap could be arranged at some point? According to the press sheet, one of the members (I think the drummer) was in the Lillingtons, but this sounds about as much like the Lillingtons as Born Against sounded like Screeching Weasel. Oh, and the fade out to "When Laughter Turns to Screams" is anthemic enough to make even AFI proud. I definitely want to check out any other stuff these guys put out. —Adrian Salas (Basement)

STEINWAYS, THE:

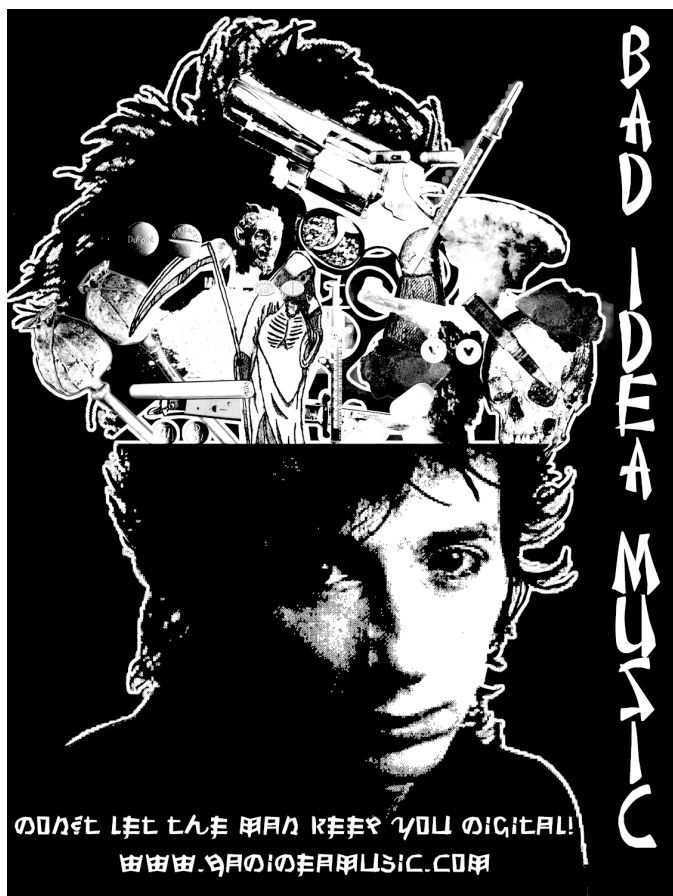
Rocket Surgery: 7" EP

...if Mutant Pop Records was still in business, which it isn't, the presence of the Steinways would cause Timbo to spontaneously combust in an explosion of piss, shit, snot, cum,

blood, saliva and undocumented brain goo, so, in retrospect, it's probably for the best that Mutant Pop is no longer with us. Ten funny as hell—yet strangely meaningful—pop punk songs on a seven-inch 45; tight as the Ergs, but not as jazzy; three tunes merely short, the other seven ultra-brief indeed. I kinda think you need this. Actually, I'm certain of it. **BEST SONG:** "Milk Was a Bad Choice" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "(My Girlfriend Is A) Crazy Fucking Cat Lady." I hear ya. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** "You can also learn a great deal about pianos by visiting www.google.com and entering 'The Steinways' into the empty text field." —Rev. Nørb (Don Giovanni)

STONEKING, C.W.: King Hokum: CD

As with most Voodoo Rhythm releases, I was thrown for a loop when I first popped C.W. Stoneking's *King Hokum* into the CD player. I took a look at the cover art—a faded picture of a guy from a decade long past holding some sort of dobro resonator guitar—scratched my head and thought, "Huh." The music brings to mind Robert Johnson and Louis Armstrong; old delta blues plucked languidly and sung in a rich but broken voice that would turn a lot of those old bluesmen green with envy. The album is set in a fictitious Southern town in the 1920s and uses the Dodo bird, bad luck, and bad lovin' as its subject matter. "You Took My Thing and Put It in Your Place" is a hilarious, tongue-in-cheek





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duet with loads of sexual innuendo and enough innocent charm to keep you from focusing on the fact that it's about erectile dysfunction. Once again, Voodoo Rhythm scores with an offbeat, unique release that will spend hours and hours in my CD player. —Josh Benke (Voodoo Rhythm)

SUNDOWNER: Four One Five: CD
Sundowner is Chris McCaughan, guitarist and co-vocalist of the Lawrence Arms' solo project. If you're at all familiar with his work in the Lawrence Arms, this album should be a shoe-in to your collection. If not, grab a copy, or head over to that silly punk news website to stream a few songs off the album. It's solid and earnest. Try emotional, not "emo." This is anything and everything BUT what Red Scare has been known to churn out: a good healthy heaping of pop punk mayhem. But it works, and it's really great. While it might not get you to mosh and pogo, it's punk rock as it should be—groundbreaking and beautiful. —Mr. Z (Red Scare)

SURRENDER: Self-titled: 7"
When I was younger and hadn't put together large pieces of the punk puzzle together, I listened to a lot of Crass—I only had about ten records, listening to them constantly—and learned a lot. Say what you will about the band, there were times in almost every record that it got downright pretty. Eve Libertine had a haunting, cavernous—even sweet—lilt to her voice that

seemed like a freshly released dove above the bulldozed, skree-filled, vulture-pecked carnage that Crass is usually remembered for. Plus, Crass were smart. Enter Surrender. They take that five to ten percent of Crass that was unnervingly beautiful and make a record with those types of elements, tension, and iconography as the taking-off point. Instead of slogans that tend to wear down like tire treads over time, Surrender relies on open-ended questions and statements: "What if," "What now?" "Pay no more" and "Surrender Is." Surrender's smart, too, and questions basic human assumptions while providing a soundtrack to some rump shaking. This is some great stuff. —Todd (Surrender)

SVARTENBRANDT: Från Andra Sidan Spåren...: CD
If you're a fan of punk rock and you live in the year 2007, there is a wide variety of music that has influenced you. A lot of different speeds, vocal styles, guitar playing, etc. It seems like really good bands are influenced by many different styles, but seem to create a sound that is original and familiar. Like a new acquaintance in which you share mutual friends. You can see these bands' record collections and notice which ones have well-worn grooves, but also hidden in the stacks are records you might not expect but you're not surprised that they're there. What I'm trying to say is, Svartenbrandt are really good. It's that


simple. They play punk rock with a serrated edge. A really sharp serrated edge. It's rough and gritty, and fucking aggressive. The English translation of the lyrics in their insert is a gift to the world. You can tell that whoever wrote them has done some serious thinking and is seriously pissed off, but not in a belligerent way that makes you wanna write them off. This release is totally DIY and should impress even the most jaded curmudgeon out there. If you enjoy the European perspective of the looming doom that is upon us, ala No Hope For The Kids, this is in the same vein. —Daryl (Self-released, svartnbrandt@gmail.com)

TEST PATTERNS: No Translation: 7"
Happy bubble gum, quick and fun, fucking dance, bitch, 'cause we're gonna rock. I wanna put this on every day and make the dudes having random sex in my alley look in the window and feel jealous of the good time this 45 is. —Speedway Randy (Contaminated)

TOASTERS, THE: One More Bullet: CD
I can't believe this band is still kicking out the ska! This band has been doing it since 1982 and is one of the few that are still standing and still going strong. What I always like about this band is that they play the two tone ska with the best of them. But they always mix it up and add flavors of reggae and other Caribbean elements. The key to their music is that the music is fun and is a perfect backdrop for a good time. Ska

lovers will not be disappointed with this strong release from this veteran band. —Donofthedeath (Stomp)

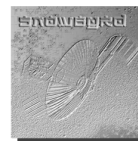
TOTALITÄR: Vi Är Eliten: CD
I recently somehow ended up in a conversation with my dentist, a very nice woman from Sweden, about Scandinavian hardcore. As most who know me will attest, I usually end up in a conversation with *everybody* about music 'cause, hey, I *really* like music, but talking to a dentist about the finer point of Mob 47's career is a bit much. Anyway, I plop this on and the whole thing makes sense. Aside from the obvious (both Totalitär and my dentist share a common country of origin), both full-bore fjordcore and having one's gums sliced and diced take a little getting used to, but the benefits of both outweigh the discomfort. In the case of Totalitär, one is treated to one seriously heavy slice of pulverizing Swedish thrash sure to liven up any party (as they rip through "Du Som Bara Hatar" on the stereo next to me, I find myself wishing they were an East L.A. band [or I was Swedish] so I could follow them around the county from one backyard to the next), and in the case of the ol' chompers, she says I'll now be able to keep them for the rest of my life. Think I'll float her a CD for the office with these guys, Mob 47, Rajoitus, Krigshot, DS-13, and others on it. The older patients will no doubt love it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Prank)



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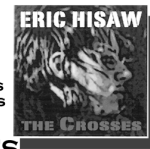
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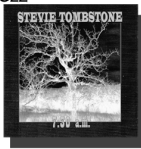


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"TWANG FROM THE GRAVE"
"SONGS LIKE "JAILHOUSE TATTOO" AND "NO BODY" CONTINUE TO PACK RESONANCE EVEN IN THEIR STATE OF ADVANCED DECOMPOSITION." GREG BEETS-AUSTIN CHRONICLE

STEVIE TOMBSTONE "7:30 A.M."

"A SLICE OF HONKY-TONK THAT COUCHES HEARTBREAK, BETRAYAL, AND MURDER IN HARD-BITTEN ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD MAKE THE MAN IN BLACK PROUD" CHRISTOPHER GRAY-AUSTIN CHRONICLE



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Touch Me Nots: Sometimes when listening to back-to-basics and roots-inspired music, I can get into it from an almost academic/archaeological standpoint. It's good, I like it, it holds its own, glad I heard it. But *The Touch Me Nots* do more. They make me want to sway, to snarl, to dance and make me feel like I'm living in today, even if they sorta sound like yesterday in the best possible sense. Nice. *Grave Blankets:* Hmmm. I hear what they're going for: *Gun Club* via *The Gibson Brothers*, but I just ain't spooning up what they're slopping down at their cafeteria. Sorry, but I'll be reaching for the *Bassholes* for that. —Todd (self-released)

True story: I saw the Butthole Surfers at Fenders in Long Beach back in the late '80s. Put simply, their set was pretty goddamned weird: two drummers; songs about "the fleshy thing that grew outta Johnny's head" and proclamations that "the white man sold Quaaludes to the monkeys;" strobe lights flashing like mad; Gibby, in a green dress and hair covered in clothespins, pours green paint all over the audience and proceeds to flail his head about, sending clothespin projectiles flying in all directions. What, you ask, does this have to do with the Tov Dolls. you ask? Well, I'll

give you one guess who came on after them. That's when the mindfuck *really* began. The set the Dolls put down that night was like regressing damn near back to the womb after the total acid meltdown I'd just witnessed prior, with songs about wayward intelligent elephants, combative spiders, test tube babies, and singer/guitarist Olga doing a striptease down to a pair of Bermuda shorts before tearing through a white-hot cover of the Surfaris "Wipe Out." No two bands were more diametrically opposed, yet more perfect for sharing a bill, and it remains the single strangest band lineup I've seen to date (I think Final Conflict and a couple of Nardcore bands were on the bill, too, but it's been too long ago to remember all the particulars and I digress anyway). By the time I saw them that night, the Toy Dolls (and the Surfers) were one of my favorite bands, an opinion formed over constant listens of the first two of the three albums under discussion here. *Dig That Groove Baby*, their first full-length, set the template—instrumental intro/outro, silly songs with alliterative titles delivered at lightning speed with lyrics culled from soap opera plots and/or what seemed like stuff Dr. Seuss hadn't gotten around to writing about—for every subsequent release. It also set the bar rather high from the get-go, with its frantic tempos, Olga's jaw-dropping fretwork and a rhythm section any band would kill for. Although they fell just shy of that bar with their second release, *Bar*

Far Out Disc, it was still, compared to most others bands, a phenomenal release, with instant classics like "She Goes to Fino's," "You and a Box of Handkerchiefs," and "Bless You My Son" (the tempo of which rivals the fastest Dead Kennedys jam, yet still manages to stay well within the realm of the Toy Dolls' "punk patheticque" musical parameters), as well as a couple of disposable TV themes and a commercial break. Their third, *Idle Gossip*, features consistently superb songs ("Lambrusco Kid," "Harry Cross," and the title track, to name a few) slightly hampered by some patented 1980s "overproduction," in this case enough reverb to make it sound like they're playing in a cathedral. The quality of the songs still manages to shine through, making for a solid listen despite any sonic setbacks. For this round of reissues, Captain Oi has added to each CD tracks from every EP, single, and compilation the band graced during the period documented on each release, which means, in addition to the original album tracks, the listener will be treated to other hits like "I've Got Asthma," "Tommy Kowey's Car," "Deirdre's A Slag," Cheerio & Toodle Pip," "James Bond Lives Down Our Street," at least three different versions of "She Goes to Finos," and oodles of others. While I'm kinda put out that the album version of "Nellie the Elephant" has been inexplicably replaced with the single version, these three reissues remain mandatory for

This is a definite departure from the early singles, and it's not a complaint. It seems like they started with a survey of the late '70s with Wire and Gang of Four and are now exploring the early '80s with XTC with a Style Council feel in the mix. The paces are slower, more mellowly melodic, but, fuck it, dude, they can write great songs, and there's not enough of that in the world. Is there a Jesus and Mary Chain tribute album coming out that I'm unaware about? This is second cover I've heard by a punk band in the last two months (Dan Padilla, too), and it's interesting to hear that stuff again without that wash of zzzzzzzzzzzz that the JandMC put all the way through albums that had a tendency (although a fine band) to smooch a lot of their songs together for me. -Todd (Seeing Eye)

Hello Top Ten of 2007. With this, the release of the Tranzmitors' first full-length, I was seventy-five percent expecting that they'd collect all of their 7"s, add a song, slap it on the butt, and call it a day. Nope. Nine new ones and a Scientists' cover. It's a cliché, but in this instance it's true. You get different beasts from this record at differing volumes. At lower, "driving the folks around in their minivan in traffic" volumes, it's much more Elvis

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Costello, Vapors, and soft melody, but when it's rattling the plaster on the ceiling, the Jam and Exploding Hearts slice through the speakers. All this is basically me naming bands I really like—all of who embrace power pop—and the Tranzmitors not only make me think of them, they elbow themselves into the lineup right beside them, grinning madly. Highly recommended. —Todd (Deranged)

TRASHIES:

What Makes a Man Get Trashed?: CD

A bit more accomplished than I remember the last thing I heard from them, but they're still hitting just shy of the "greatness" mark. What's on here sounds like they're making a run at the throne of L.A.'s late, great Deadbeats, and they might've been successful, too, if it weren't for a muddy "trash rock" mix that actually dilutes any necessary rawness from the music. In the end, some interesting things are afoot here, but they come not with a roar but submerged underwater. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mortville)

TUFF LOVS: Party Dudes: CD

I know it's not a popular opinion, but I still feel that just because a band *can* get fucked up, it doesn't make it a good idea (for example; D4 = can do whatever the hell they want). When I got this CD I was a little wary at first (again, if the sixteen-year-old kids in my neighborhood can get drunk, is it really that big of a deal if you do?), but was

put at ease within seconds, because this is great. Part Supersuckers (during some of the slower, groove-heavy jams) and part Marked Men (actually, make that a skuzzier Marked Men), that, while may be all about partying, ultimately focuses on the rock. Very recommended. —Joe Evans III (New Art School, www.newartschoolrecords.com)

UNLOVABLES, THE: Heartsickle: CD

Never has a band been so inaccurately named as The Unlovables. This band is so highly lovable I can hardly stand it. Although perhaps not as seamless as their previous album of pop punk perfection *Crush Boyfriend Heartbreak*, this new one, *Heartsickle* has still been in heavy rotation in my home, office, and car ever since it fell into my eager hands. Lead singer Hallie Bullit writes some of the catchiest melodies and wittiest lyrics that I've heard in a long time. As anyone who's heard the band's previous album and EP might expect, there are lots of songs about the ups and downs of punk rock love on here, but there's also a tear-jerkingly sweet ode to a best ladyfriend ("Samantha") and a great why-do-you-want-me-to-get-married-and-drive-a-minivan? rant ("Disaster") So highly recommended, all my friends are sick of hearing about it already. —Jennifer Whiteford (Whoa Oh)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

We Love the Blowtaps: 2x7"

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Blowtaps songs, a kickass swamp horrorpunk band that is ten years old now. It's a who's who of garage rock: Jay Reatard guitar punks up "Venoms Victims Wine," sounding in between The Reatards and his solo stuff, Tractor Sex Fatality gives their own spooky brand of weirdness to "Judas Order," Vilent Lovers Club (which is Odie from the Baseball Furies) gives a great '70s moody vibe with "Phone Call from a Corpse" that's very different from the Furies, The Mistreaters provide perfect dirty glory for "Cannibal Lust," The Radio Beats give a short, sweet and ripping version of "Brasshead Smash," and the Trailer Park Tornadoes break down the sick "Within these Walls," which is a recently rediscovered song on the Blowtaps heavy *P.S. This Is a Zombie* CD. All in all, a killer compilation. I suppose that's a given with the Blowtaps songs and the bands here, but it surpassed my expectations, mofo. —Speedway Randy (Big Neck)

VENEREA: One Louder: CD

Holy fuckin' rock me...if Call Me Lightning's record is a scalpel, Venerea's is an anvil dropped on the head. The first tune, though, made me think that this was gonna be some sort of new era metal drivel the likes of the Deftones or similar stuff, but I was pleased to be very wrong. It took me fifteen minutes to get through the second song ("Guantanamo") 'cause it was pure powerful hardcore that grabbed me by the nutsack and refused to let go. Venerea sound, at least to

this humble reviewer, like a metalified version of Bad Religion; there's some bits of chunky power metal mixed with piles and piles of blistering yet melodic hardcore. Kind of like a less muscle-bound version of Biohazard. Lyrical topics range from the political to the beauty of defiance to thoughtful musings on love, life, and whatnot. On the whole, *One Louder* rocked my socks off; I couldn't get enough of it and I very much look forward to what these four Swedish chaps can come up with in the future. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Bad Taste)


VERDE: The Undeserved Current: CD

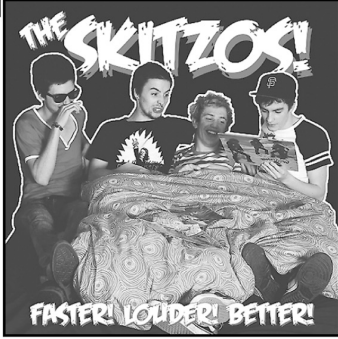
Ethereal-sounding rock reminiscent of Galaxy 500, Codeine, and, at times, Sebadoh. It's listening to stuff like this that makes me wonder, "Would I have ended up in anger management if I was listening to Verde rather than Off With Their Heads?" —Dave Disorder (Bakery Outlet)

VOLT: Self-titled: CD

The newest wave has bands like Volt leading the way. And what a perfect fucking name for this band. Post-post-post modern (how stupid are labels?) new wave explosion—1985 time drum machine, stabbing electro-guitars, nasally male-female vocals. But more put into it than just picking the right instruments, dressing up, and freaking out. Volt takes it to the house. They got that solid energy you can feel with a band when they aren't trying to fit in to a scene but are making music

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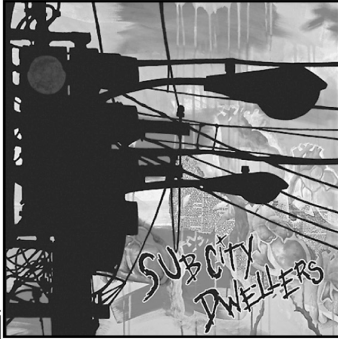


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they want to make. On the fence of art punk and just cool, rocking songs, they tear it up with speedy screams and killer, slow detonations. The beauty of robots covered in flesh, picking up instruments. —Speedway Randy (In the Red)

VOMIT: *Kate Moss: 7"*

One sided 7" of some serious Central California thrashy negacore. Eight songs on one side, so you know what you're getting yourself into: a couple sludgy ones and a whole bunch of super fast, super short, priceless gems of unsightliness. The appearance of this record really stands out—which it should—because it took the work of three labels (Give Praise, Thrash Up Your Ass, and Cactus Plant) just to get this to the masses. Another great example of small town hardcore really showing the rest of the world how fucking pissed they are too. This band is now called War Pigs. —Daryl (cactus_plant_ouch@yahoo.com)

WHAT REMAINS: *Destroys All Monsters: CD*

I wanted to like this band as soon as I read the track list, because their song, "The Truth Is Never Flattery, Dr. Adams," is a reference to *This Island Earth*, the classic '50s sci-fi flick skewered in the MST3K movie. From that note, I was expecting something more goofy, but What Remains still did not disappoint. Their brand of emo-inflected indie-flavored punk may not be the most creative, but,

consarnit, sometimes you just want to hear something that's good and enjoyable without trying to start a damned revolution. —Sarah Shay (Dave's Bedroom)

WITCHES WITH DICKS: *Manual: CD*
Man, this shit is tight. Think of the Ringers by way of Dillinger Four, and the Thumbs. For me, this is the kind of record that you're unsure about at first, then you listen to it a couple of times and all of a sudden you're singing the songs in your sleep. Then you wake up and say, "God damn I feel like listening to that fucking CD again." My only complaint is that a witch with a dick is a warlock. —Dave Disorder (Kiss Of Death)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH: *Totalitarian Sodomy: LP*

A highly anticipated second release from this Austin, TX powerhouse. Continuing on from their 2002 debut LP *The Sucking of the Missile Cock*, the band really took their time in releasing their next full length. They did put out an ample supply of 7"s and splits to keep the hungry at bay. But it was well worth the wait. The production is top notch with everything mixed at the right level, achieving a power level that should knock most flat out on their ass. Hard hitting, a boot-to-the-stomach music that reaches a level of perfection that many try to achieve but fall short. Even though I do own a few of their earlier releases, I hate to say it; I think this record makes their previous material almost forgettable. It

is that enjoyable from start to finish; a feeling of extended rage that is so fierce, that it makes you pay attention, while their early material focused more on speed. A lot of the new material displays better musicianship and slows things down a tad to better express the power. Guitar riffs that have an early KISS meets Motörhead metal feel mixed with the punk/hardcore. Drums and bass that drive the lower octaves that make subwoofers push hard so that you can definitely hear and feel what is being played. Jack Control's dark signature vocal delivery layered right on top of the mayhem ties everything together for a cohesive barrage of power. I know many who have knowledge of this band have already purchased this release, myself included. I usually don't review my personal purchases anymore. But if a release is assigned to me or requested, I will review it. Even though this has been out a few months, I hope someone reading this will check out this release and get introduced to another side of punk that is different from the more mainstream. I believe after hearing this, a high percentage would be more inclined to search out other great DIY releases that are out there. —Donofthedeat (Hardcore Holocaust)

YEARS FROM NOW: *We're Gonna Need a Bigger Boat: CD*

Do you have friends? How did they not tell you that you are not good enough to cover any Descendents' song, let alone "Bikeage," which should probably be covered by nobody. Ever.

Because it's that good. Oh, also, people on *Press Your Luck* said "Big money, big money, no whammies" and not, as your first song is called, "Big Bucks, No Whammies." Thanks for playing. —Megan (Get Outta Town)

YOU AM I: *Convicts: CD*

Aussie four-piece comes roaring back with this incredible release. Think of a frothy stew that includes The 'Mats, Johnny Thunders, even a dash of The Saints. The first two tracks—"Thank God I've Hit The Bottom," and "It Ain't Funny How We Don't Talk"—are worth the price alone. But from there it only gets better. "By My Own Hand" and "I'm a Mess" are also in the red. If these guys play your town you should be there before the club opens. I'm fucking serious! —Sean Koepnick (Yep Roc)

YOUTH BRIGADE: *Heidegger, Headgear and Hugs—The Emo Years: CD*

Just a friendly reminder that it's been eleven years and still no new album has been forthcoming. What, are you making a run at breaking Boston's record for length between releases now? Sheesh, get back to work already or we'll have those "summer getaway" mansions you bought with them *Dividing Line* royalties eminent domained. —Jimmy Alvarado (BYO)

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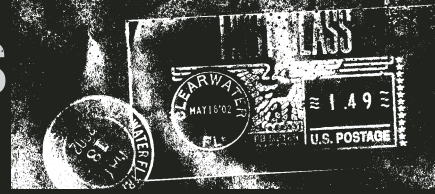
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- Slow Death**, 57 Passage du Bureau, 75011 Paris, France
- Small Pool**, 2136 E. Blanchard Ave., Anaheim, CA 92806
- Snuffy Smiles**, 12-A Kamikousaicho Shichiku Kita-ku, Kyoto 603-8117, Japan
- Square Wave**, 9032 Colbreggan, Huntington Beach, CA 92646
- Steel Cage**, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA, 19125
- Stomp**, 78 Rachel E. Montreal, QC H2W 1C6, Canada
- Stop Whining Start Winning**, 58 Belaire Dr., Horseheads, NY 14845
- Stumble**, 57 Leaside Dr., St. Catherines, ON Canada L2M 4G1
- Sudden Death**, PO Box 43001, Burnaby BC V5G 3H0, Canada
- Suite 666**, 4200 Paradise #3116, Las Vegas, NV 89169
- Super Secret**, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767
- Surrender**, PO Box 301, Berkeley, CA 94701
- Sweet Rot**, PO Box 78025, Vancouver, BC V5N 5W1, Canada
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- Unterm Durchschnitt Schallplatten**, PO Box 190 471, 50501 Köln, Germany, www.unterm-durchschnitt.de
- Vending Machine**, PO Box 4746, Inglewood, CA 90309-4746
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- Waxvaccine**, PO Box 40527, Portland, OR 97240
- Whoa Oh**, 21-36 43rd St., Suite 3, Astoria, NY 11105
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ZINE REVIEWS

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“A flashing
ground for ‘gross
guys with their
big, weird dicks
on display.”

—Keith Rosson
**CAPITOL CITY
ZINE COMPILATION**

A BEAT OF OUR OWN #2, \$2,
8 ½" x 11", newsprint, 40 pgs.

This newsprint zine is all interviews. Most of the interviews are with members of bands from twenty or thirty years ago like The Avengers, The Hated, and A.P.P.L.E., doing a shallow rehashing of the history of the music that they were making while many of us were in diapers. Though I do love a lot of original punk, I question why someone would devote an entire zine to these old stories when there are so many new ones happening right now. History is important, but such a backward-looking perspective is detrimental to what is, supposedly, a forward-looking culture. —CT Terry (Jared/A Beat Of Our Own, 123 B Park Ave., Raleigh, NC 27605)

AGAINST, #1 and 2, \$2,
8 ½" x 6", 50 and 48 pgs.

Darn it. Each issue of *Against* is an ongoing piece of a novel—about dealing with living in a boring middle of nowhere town—and getting out and moving on to something else with your life. Why the “darn it”? I totally tried doing this once, and it sucked compared to this. —Joe Evans III (Riley MacLead, 1157 43rd Street, 01, Brooklyn NY 11219, rmaclead@riseup.net)

BROKEN PENCIL, #35,
\$5.95 (Canadian), 8 ½" x 11",
glossy cover, offset, 72 pgs.

This is a pretty cool zine and unlike much of anything else I've ever seen. *Broken Pencil* is a “magazine of zine culture and the independent arts.” I'm not sure why they call themselves a magazine, but whatever. Canadian in origin, there are all kinds of interesting things related to the culture of those who put together zines or just find them interesting. There are, of course, zine reviews, but there are also features on spoken word artists, indie pen pals, and ZineWiki. There's a section on finding out where ex-zinesters are

now and random photos, drawings, and poetry. The layout looks really good and complements the content quite nicely. I was unaware of *Broken Pencil* before getting this, but I will now have to send them my zine. Hurray for Canadians! —Kurt Morris (PO Box 203, Stn P, Toronto, ON, M5S 2S7, Canada)

CAPITOL CITY ZINE

COMPILATION, \$6,
5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 56 pgs.

This is a collection of contributions from various zinesters in the Austin, Texas area. Apparently, it's mostly previously unreleased stuff, though the only zine I was already familiar with (*Snakepit*) had a submission that I'd already seen before somewhere else. Anyway, there's also stuff from *Blurt!*, *Greasespot*, *World Salad*, *Option Paralysis*, *Tightrope Laboratory*, *Surprise Autopsy*, *Clip Tart* and *Homemade Boat*. The cover's a really thick silkscreen and there's even a kind of poster insert thing, but as far as the individual contributions go, they seemed kind of half-assed. There just wasn't a whole lot there that held my interest: two girls' trip to a nude beach was actually about the funniest part—the writer pretty much summed up the whole nude beach experience as nothing more than a flashing ground for “gross guys with their big, weird dicks on display.” A guy meets the woman of his dreams and then has an allergic reaction to peanuts on one of their dates, acts like an asshole and almost dies of anaphylactic shock, there's some collages, a few comics that make no sense, a resource guide for the Austin area, etc. All in all, it's a great idea, I just wish the contributors would've taken the opportunity a bit more seriously and not handed in such lackluster stuff. —Keith Rosson (Lauren Trout, 110 E. North Loop, Austin, TX 78751)

FANCY DIGEST 2007, 10 cents,
5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 20 pgs.

The table of contents/info page says, “Fashion, Art, Crap.” One

out of three wouldn't be bad, except *Fancy Digest* falls under the least complementary of that trinity. A self-described “commode companion,” the only use I could see getting out of this zine while in the john would be to tear out the pages to wipe the shit from one's anus on those occasions when one unwittingly runs out of toilet paper. The featured article in this issue of *Fancy* focuses on the disturbing trend of low rise jeans and the resulting “anal cleavage” phenomenon. While the writing isn't awful, the intention of the article is to be funny, and it's not. It strains to be clever in a Dave Eggersian way, and one self-important, so-called staggering genius is enough, thanks. The primary function of the ads (eight of twelve of them list the *Fancy* web address) in this zine appears to be to get people to visit the *Fancy Digest* website. I don't think I'll be logging on anytime soon. —Josh Benke (*Fancy Digest*, PO Box 110411, Brooklyn, NY 11211)

FANORAMA #30, \$3?,
8 ½" x 11", color-copied, 58 pgs.

“Dedicated to my queer cabal of nihilistic, psycho, hip-hop, death, punks.” I feel like I came in on the middle of a conversation here because Reb, the editor, keeps referring to previous issues, and continuing with stories that began years back. A recurring theme is the publishing of prisoners' writing, and Reb tells the joyous story of the release of a prisoner friend. Finally, *Fanorama* is peppered with photo spreads of nude men, as I found out on a rush hour-crowded F train last week! —CT Terry (*Fanorama*, 109 Arnold Ave., Cranston, RI 02905)

FURY, THE, #16, \$1,
4" x 5 ½", 52 pgs.

At first I thought this was a music zine. There is stuff about music, including a piece on a (good) radio station, and some record reviews (mostly ripping apart some

weirder bands), but the bulk of it is perzine-style writing, about places the author's seen, experiences with school, and dealing with things seeming to fall apart. Some of it gets a little tough to read (figuratively and literally), but it's still interesting. I just hope things go better for the dude down the line. —Joe Evans III (Mark Novotny, 5412 Sixth Ave, Countryside IL 60525, TheFuryZine@hotmail.com)

HUB CITY: OUT OF THE

BASEMENT, #2, \$2,
8 ½" x 6", 29 pgs.

Hometowns are a funny thing; it's great to have pride in what's happening in your neighborhood, but you have to be willing to get out and see the rest of the world every now and then. I say this as *Hub City*'s policy is, “Send us stuff as long as it pertains to New Brunswick music.” It features record reviews of local bands and interviews with a local musician/promoter and Miranda from Hunchback about “bleeding on the road.” There's quality stuff; I just hope its main priority is quality rather than geography as it keeps going (which it should). —Joe Evans III (*Hub City*, PO Box 1561, New Brunswick NJ 08903)

I NEED MORE! #1, \$1 or trade,
5 ½" x 8 ½", glossy!, 20 pgs.

A zine by a music promoter who uses—oddly—glossy, thick paper for the entire zine, which confuses Ms. Tight Pants! Articles about The Briefs, Iggy Pop, Zero Boys, et. al. Plus an ode to the Exploding Hearts. Sadly, not a lot new here, although I do share Mr. I Need More's love of the Exploding Hearts, but frankly, if someone doesn't love 'em, I question their judgment, and assume that they spend their time listening to free jazz or something similarly awful! —Maddy (Mike Hooker, 4017 Victory Dr. #210, Austin, TX 78704)

ICONOCLAST, #95, \$5, 8 1/2" x 11", printed, 80 pgs. *Iconoclast* is a freaking huge (80 pages, full-sized) zine that is made up entirely of poetry and stories, as well as reviews of zines, poetry, and other books. The layout is simple: black print on white pages with only a couple of pictures. For the most part, having worked in an academic library periodicals section, *Iconoclast* reminds me of a lo-fi version of some of the academic literature journals. I can't speak much on the quality of the poems, as most poetry has never done much for me, but the stories were well-written and interesting. If you're feeling a bit high-brow with your zine literature, *Iconoclast* may not be a bad bet to check out. —Kurt Morris (1675 Amazon Rd., Mohegan Lake, NY 10547)

INSIDE ARTZINE #11, \$5, 8 1/2" x 11", full-color glossy, 40 pgs. Holy fuck, there's some sinister shit in here. While it's gorgeously laid-out and designed and the production values are through the roof, it's just resoundingly *creepy as fuck*. You want frighteningly real-looking autopsied baby doll heads? Beautifully rendered paintings of nude women pulling out their own tongues or ribcages that fan out into gaping monster jaws? Weird articles about tattooed mummy corpses that don't make any sense? Ink drawings of hooded women, "Suicide" written on their bellies, pulling their labia apart? Then you've hit the jackpot here, my friend. About half of it's in German, the stuff that is translated into English still didn't make any sense to me at all, and I don't know anything about H.P. Lovecraft. The whole thing is so freaking ominous, disjointed and *weird* that I felt about the same looking at it as I would if I *knew* there was a brown recluse spider somewhere in my room, I just didn't know *where*. Shit is *that* creepy. —Keith Rosson (Inside Artzine, PO Box 2266, D-54212 Trier, Germany)

LA FRONTERA: THE BORDER, \$1.25, 6" x 4 1/4", copied, 56 pgs. Brutally honest personal zine about one woman's experiences with No Mos Muertes and Humane Borders, two organizations dedicated to providing relief and assistance to immigrants trying to cross the U.S./Mexico border from the Mexico side of the fence. Like I said, much of it is simple, raw emotion thrown onto the page—furious handwritten text juxtaposed with grainy photographs. It's a hard call for me—on one hand, I fully believe in the cathartic aspect of projects like this (she writes of finding men

in the desert whose feet are literally gangrenous and probably in need of amputation, and only being able to clean and bandage the wounds, feed them, give them water, and send them back on their way to try crossing again—I can't even imagine the helplessness that must go hand in hand with something like that) but I also feel that, with a bit of editing and some different layout decisions (the handwriting is really difficult to read at times, for one), the zine's potential impact could've been increased tenfold. But I also understand reaching that point where you feel so helpless and angry that you've got to do *something*. —Keith Rosson (girlveryday@gmail.com)

LITTLE SHORTS, #4, \$2 + a stamp, 4" x 5", copied, 30 pgs. Very small, very brief zine about nothing much whatsoever, just whatever seems to come to the mind of the author. There are random drawings and phrases as well as lists of recommendations of books, music, and films. There is also a short writeup of a serial killer and something about the Milgram experiment. There's really not much to go on here and what is here isn't too impressive. I'd like to say that this looks like the type of thing I was putting out when I was in high school but 1.) Erin is twenty and 2.) I was putting out better stuff when I was in high school. Oh well. Better luck next time. —Kurt Morris (Erin Kubes, 1608 Basler St. Apt. 3, Sacramento, CA 95814)

MASS MOVEMENT #20, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", glossy, 92 pgs. Glossy-paged hardcore rag from the United Kingdom. The magazine's thick, the type is tiny, the riffs are sick, and the dudes are hard. It's actually pretty decent, if you're into this kind of stuff—interviews with Gorilla Biscuits, Sick Of It All, Underdog, Justice, Ignite, Comeback Kid and tons of others. While it strays pretty far from my own musical interests or ideologies, there were a few points of interest—for one, Jon Josef is *still* blathering on about getting fucked over by Harley and the Cro-Mags twenty years or more after the fact (his interview is peppered with pretty liberal usage of the terms "faggots" and "niggas" and—hilariously—he *repeatedly* brags about all the hotshot executives in the movie industry that he's friends with) and that the guy from Ignite, while still coming off as somewhat of a meathead, actually had some really interesting things to say about growing up in a communist country and the sustainability and fragility of capitalism. Generally, if you're into the above-mentioned bands

and are willing to slog through some really small type, you'll probably find something (or a few somethings) that grab you here. —Keith Rosson (Mass Movement, PO Box 193, Bridgend, CF31 9BN, South Wales, UK)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #288, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 147 pgs. It's always good to see *MRR*. I used to buy copies in high school when my friends and I would go out "getting some." "Getting some" meant cruising around Richmond in a 1982 Dodge Colt, blasting *Dischord 1981*, going to Soundhole Records and maybe a mall food court. A lot has changed since then. Soundhole closed, I graduated and Rev. Nørb now writes for *Razorcake*. However, *MRR* still has George Tabb, I've still never read one of Lefty Hooligan's columns, and *MRR* is still an indispensable punk rock resource that is loaded with reviews, interviews, and columns. —CT Terry (Maximum RockNRoll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

NARCOLEPSY, #1, \$2, 8 1/2" x 6", 18 pgs. Mostly a collection of zine reviews, *but*, separating it from the herd are music-related newspaper clippings and comics from the editor's kids, which are cute. —Joe Evans III (Narcolepsy Press Review, PO Box 17131, Anaheim CA 92817-7131)

NOSE KNOWS, THE, Vol.2, Iss. 49-52, \$3, 5 1/2" x 4 1/4", copied. This is a cute little weekly newsletter (which really surprised me once I realized it), covering topics ranging from comic, sweatless people who do or don't drink, *Little House on the Prairie*, and bears. Granted, each issue is a page, but I'm amazed that this comes out weekly. —Joe Evans III (2514 N Rampart St., New Orleans, LA 70117)

NOWHERE TO PARK, #?, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8", copied, ? pgs. Based on the address listed, I think the person who does this zine lives pretty close to me. In fact, I could probably walk to his house. It's kind of strange because I have no idea who this is. But the zine isn't too bad. I kind of feel as though I missed something along the way, but this involves the author vacationing from Seattle to Philadelphia, but it's not so much a road trip zine as it is just a zine of his adventures in Philly: biking around, working at a falafel joint, and having some Ukrainian girl ask to marry him in order not to be deported. There are a lot of great drawings in here, too. Some of the writing was a bit dry and the layout

could use a little work, but other parts made me smile and laugh. So it's real hit and miss, but, overall, I think the good outweighs the bad. —Kurt Morris (315 N. Greenwood Cir., Seattle, WA 98103)

OFF-LINE, #40, Donations, 4" x 5 1/2", copied, 80 pgs. This is a really fascinating issue regarding how to set up your own DIY commitment ceremony (in lieu of a traditional wedding). There are those who don't desire to get married by the state or church and for those who wish to do that, this is not only a fascinating read but a great guide on how to set everything up. Vincent and Claire put this together and it covers everything you'd need to know from finding a space, getting the food, bachelor and bachelorette parties, and clothing. I learned a lot and it's inspired me a lot in ideas I've had concerning how I would like my own ceremony to be, should I get married one day. This is all written in journal form over the course of months. Vincent and Claire spell out nearly every detail during this time, and while there's a lot of stuff in here, none of it seems too excessive. No matter what form of commitment ceremony you take with your partner, there is material in here for everyone to garner. —Kurt Morris (Claire E. Cocco & Vincent J. Romano, 35 Barker Ave. #4G, White Plains, NY 10601)

OX FANZINE #71, €4.50, 8 1/4" x 11.5", glossy/perfect-bound, 148 pgs. Ox ist ein Deutsches Magazin das punk, hardcore und rock 'n' roll beinhaltet. Es hat Dr. Junior am Umschlag, millionen von Kritiken und Interviews, und es kommt mit einem CD von Internationalen rock bands. Ich wuensche ich koennte es lesen. —CT Terry, translated by Sabrina Oberlechner (Ox, PO Box 102225, 42766 Haan, Germany)

PRISON FOCUS #27, Free, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 40 pgs. This is a California-based newsprint zine for and about prisoners. It's a voice for prisoners and a source of information for folks on the outside. Important stuff, and I agree with the politics, but I'd be a little bummed if it was the only thing on the back of the toilet at a peace punk house. —CT Terry (Prison Focus, 2940 16th St., Suite B5, SF, CA 94103)

ROCKNROLLPURGATORY, #15, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", offset printed, 64 pgs. Enthusiastic, fun zine with great taste and long interviews. The specialty for this issue is one-man bands, with some cool big names and folks I am just being

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introduced to, which is nice. It has the best facet a zine can have: true love for the subjects. Some of the questions are too long—but with genuine respect—and the interviews are cool, both informative and conversational. No rock star bullshit here. Tons and tons of OMB interviews (Almighty Do Me A Favor, Al Foul, Bloodshot Bill, Ghostwriter, Haunted George, Jeffrey Novak, John Schooley, King Louie, Reverend Beat-Man, Scott H. Biram) balanced with interviews of normal-sized musicians: Toys That Kill, Uncle Scratch's Gospel Revival, Baseball Furies, Wayne Hancock. Man, for four bucks you feel like you borrowed a great pulp book from the library. —Speedway Randy (Rocknroll Purgatory c/o Ben Lybarger, PO Box 276258, San Antonio, TX 78227, www.rocknrollpurgatory.com)

SHORT, FAST, & LOUD, #17, \$4, 8 1/4" x 10 3/4", newsprint, 80 pgs. A lot of hardcore/thrash/metal/grind talk from people who know what they're talking about. Reading *Short, Fast, & Loud* is so refreshing because the people involved are so enthusiastic about short, fast, annnnd loud music. It's like if all the seventeen-year-old kids (when they were still edge) had it together enough and

were knowledgeable enough to put something as complicated as this zine out. And on top of the interviews, columns, reviews, and history lessons, this thing also comes with a twenty-eight song comp. Definitely for anyone who loves extreme music or just digs reading cool music zines. —Daryl (Short, Fast, & Loud, 225 Lincoln Ave., Cotati, CA 94931)

SPECIOUS SPECIES #1, \$5, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", offset, 80 pgs. I'm not sure if this thing falls under the umbrella of a "literary zine," but the quality here (especially for a first issue) is pretty fantastic. Made up solely of six interviews, there's a resonance and depth here that few zines either have the ability or finances to pull off. Folks interviewed: poet Bucky Sinister, journalist Christian Parenti, who was embedded in Iraq and talks succinctly and brilliantly about U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil and the world's reliance on the U.S. dollar as a way of sustaining global capitalism, poet Ed Bowers, historian/author Elaine Pagels, who's interviewed about the history of Gnosticism and it's main differences between Gnostic Christianity and the more accepted Biblical traditions we're inundated with now. Also interviewed are filmmakers Kevin

Epps and K. Kelly, who made a documentary about Hunter's Point, an impoverished but close-knit black community near Oakland, and Swedish artist/cartoonist Matzi Stromberg. Like I said, all of the interviews are totally enthralling—if you can look past the pretty steep cover price (there are a lot of pages here, remember) and the interviews continue to be this in-depth and diverse, *Specious Species* will be one to watch for. —Keith Rosson (Specious Species, 3345 20th St., SF, CA 94110)

TALES OF BLARG! #9, \$3, 8" x 10", copied, 44 pgs. Given to me because Janelle is (was?) the drummer for Panty Raid, a band I think does no wrong. She is more prolific doing comics and zines and things, and *Blarg* is the newest collection of paper destroyed under her pen. Smashed-up comics and stories about girls, boys, living in San Fran, and a Hipsters vs. Crusties battle. It's crude in style, but I laughed and even cried a little. —Speedway Randy (Janelle Hessig, PO Box 4047, Berkeley, CA, 94704, www.gimmeaction.com)

VERBICIDE, #19, \$2, 8 1/2" x 11", glossy cover w/ printed pages, 80 pgs. *Verbicide* is another in a long line of flashy, glossy-covered

zines that I've never heard of, but which seem like they're fairly big business. There are feature/interviews with The Shins, Bad Brains, Low, Tim Barry, and indie filmmakers. One thing that makes this zine different is the inclusion of fiction. There is also a section with bands on the rise as well as the usual music reviews. Nothing too amazing is included, but I guess this is okay. I can't say there is much here I'm real interested in, but for what it is (see opening sentence) I guess it's not too bad. —Kurt Morris (www.verbicidemagazine.com)

YOU'RE AN ANGEL, YOU LI'L DEVIL, #2, \$1, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", Xerox, 38 pgs. This is a small collection of devil girl media, from artwork, advertisements, and everywhere. There's also a quick bit with Julie Newmar, regarding her appearance in *The Twilight Zone*. Talk about having a specific target audience, but it's still interesting. —Joe Evans III (PO Box 17131, Anaheim, CA 92817-7131)

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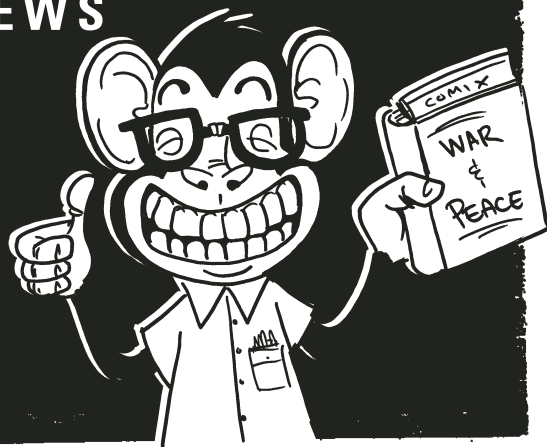
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BOOK REVIEWS



Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus, The

By Wred Fright, 221 pgs.

This the smartest “dumb” book I’ve read in ages.

Wred Fright has tackled many difficult tasks. 1.) Making me care about college students’ lives, even if they are in a garage band. 2.) The original incarnation of the *PFE* was serialized in zines—kinda like a modern day *Tale of Two Cities* but much shorter (and without beheadings)—and, yet it stands the strongest as a complete novel because the longer I was in each of the character’s heads, the more I enjoyed the momentum of the book. Reading *PFE* was like hopping on a barely moving freight that gains speed. It was really hard to jump away from when it started hauling along. 3.) Wred’s omniscient control of both the plot and the characters is, well, unfuckingbelievable (you will also learn the name of the literary device of

and lifestyle choices—communism (and the “privilege” of new underwear), paganism (and rent skipping), very loud gay sex (and being bothered solely by the “loud” part)—and compassionately letting the characters roll around in their self-prescribed roles like a field of grass; they were allowed to feel the joy and get the stains all themselves without a finger wagging by the author. They were examined, got inside of, and allowed to speak their minds. Folding that aspect into an already satisfying literary burrito made this book a complete a joy to read and I highly recommend it. PS: Any book that reminds us that the word “nerd” was first coined by Dr. Seuss in *If I Ran the Zoo* in 1951, will usually score highly by itself. —Todd (Out Your Backdoor, 4686 Meridian Rd., Williamston MI 48895)

Sit Down and Shut Up: Punk Rock Commentaries on Buddha, God, Truth, Sex, Death & Dogen’s Treasury of the Right Dharma Eye

By Brad Warner, \$14.95, 255 pgs.

To some people’s sense of propriety, punk and Buddhism might seem to go together like pedophilia and the priesthood. Even if you’re fairly liberal in your attitude towards things like inter-ideology commingling, the two admittedly make odd bedfellows, at least on the surface. Something akin to sideshow sensation “Sealo the Seal Boy” canoodling with Angelina Jolie, the saintly saver of babies. Who could’ve seen it coming? But if you were paying attention, back in the early ‘80s you might have caught a flickering of a foreshadowing of what might be coming down the pike when, in the movie *Another State of Mind*, Mike Ness mentioned his daily habit of watching the old TV show *Kung Fu*. However tenuous you might think the connection, however strained you might consider the analogy, it can’t be questioned that Ness’ ritualistic *Kung Fu* viewing represented one of the earliest known examples of where punk and Zen—as odd bedfellows—first started to awkwardly grope one another. No doubt about it: Mike Ness was a certified, card-carrying punk rocker, and while Kwai Chang Caine and Master Po were only fictional characters, they were fictional *Shaolin Zen Masters*. Using the age-old baseball/makeout metaphor, I think it’s fair to say that the whole Mike Ness/*Kung Fu* thing might’ve constituted the young bedfellows as having gotten “to first base.”

But after that initial flicker, it got quiet for a long time. Somewhere in the mid ‘80s Ray Cappel’s *Youth of Today*, the Cro Mags and other straightedgers got into the Krishnacore thing, but that was an overtly devotional offshoot of Hinduism and, thus, a far cry from anything Zen. It wasn’t until 2003 when, with the release of a couple books called *Hardcore*

No matter how hard I try, I just can’t believe that
Realization of Truth is the exclusive privilege of those
who pass a daily breathalyzer test and/or urine test.

adding a swear word in the middle of an existing word in the book).

The format of the book is that it’s told in almost linear time through the eyes of the four main characters in the first person. You are literally in four different heads throughout the entire book. Each character is introduced by name before each section and given a distinctive font to help you along, but even without such graphic design aids, each character quickly develops on their own. Each chapter is headed by A-side and B-side song titles that hint at the contents of the chapter, and the chapters themselves are broken into song parts: Intro, Verse, Chorus, Coda. All of this would be “fancy” or “precious” if that was all there was to the book, but Wred infuses a tremendous amount of tenderness and grit—and love, confusion, squirrel jihads and squirrel counter insurgencies, and catching toast with a baseball mitt—all around the lives of these four very likeable dudes in a small band in a middle-sized city in America. It was very relatable to a DIY punk rocker, such as myself.

Back to the “dumb” part. Much like *Dazed and Confused*, where the characters themselves may be lost and searching for meaning, bumbling about, trying to form their belief systems (from getting into fights, to playing the drums nude, to harboring a fugitive who becomes the band manager), Wred’s deft positioning of their dialogue and his awareness of a picture much larger than the characters’ worldview, made me feel that the book was in very secure, hidden hands the entire time. By couching philosophies

Zen and Dharma Punx, it could officially be said that the two bedfellows had rounded the bases and were now jumping each other’s bones.

Both books presented an alchemical blend of stripped-down Buddhism and hardcore punk that had no time for anything smelling the slightest bit like bullshit. Brad Warner’s *Hardcore Zen* drew its inspiration from the Soto Zen branch of Mahayana Buddhism, while Noah Levine’s *Dharma Punx* was fueled up on a more Theravadin Buddhist approach. As a result of these two books radically reconfiguring the current punk paradigm, the young Punk-Buddhist bastard child has memed itself into a virtual cottage industry/sub-sub culture, complete with feisty internet communities and discussion groups. All it needs now is a snappy name and we’re got a full-blown cultural phenomenon on our hands.

The short history of the burgeoning Punk Buddhism is already repeating itself as both Warner and Levine have just released new books on the subject, once again at just about the exact same time. Since I haven’t read the new Levine book yet, I will hereby offer my own “punk rock commentaries” on Brad Warner’s *Sit Down and Shut Up*.

This book is basically a paean to Warner’s favorite Medieval Zen Master, Dogen Zenji, who was something like the Babe Ruth of early Japanese Soto Zen, except that he never was a womanizer or a heavy drinker or an insatiable hot dog eater. But if there was a Mount Rushmore of

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Japanese Zen Masters, both Soto school and Rinzaï school, Dogen's head would surely be one of those chiseled into immortality.

Along with almost single-handedly transplanting the Caodong School of Zen from China to Japan—where it became known as “Soto”—Dogen also left behind a magnum opus called the *Shobogenzo*, in which he brilliantly explains every nuance of Zen, right down to the proper way to wipe your ass like a Buddha. It is a tome that, while universally admired, is not widely understood. The most dogged Soto student can quickly get lost in its intricacies and translators have struggled to render Dogen's unique way with words in a manner that isn't flat and utterly inscrutable. Even Warner's own teacher, the highly respected Gudo Nishijima, took a swipe at translating it and wound up with an English version of the *Shobogenzo* that scored high on accuracy points but went down the gullet like a loofah sponge. So a book like *Sit Down and Shut Up*, which takes Dogen's lofty pearls of wisdom from the Big Book and spells it all out in a way any dumb punk can get his meaty head around, is most welcome indeed.

The reason the roughly eight-hundred-year-old insights of a Japanese monk who likes to instruct you on how to pinch a loaf (as well as other things, of course) doesn't come across like a mouthful of dust—and the reason this book works so well—is that it's filtered for our consumption through a real live, down-to-earth, smart-mouthed punk rock guy who actually understands what he's talking about. Warner includes tales of the recent reunion show of his hardcore band Zero Defex, along with plenty of pop culture broadsides and smart ass quips. All of which gives the sober old monk from another place and time, a thoroughly modern make-over. And maybe even a new clarity.

Now that doesn't mean the book is without its blemishes. While Warner is no doubt something of a rogue and iconoclast within the Zen world, he is also, paradoxically, in many ways, a traditionalist and Company Joe. He shares with Soto luminaries like his teacher Nishijima, Shunryu Suzuki, and Dogen himself, a zealous proclivity towards hefty amounts of zazen (sitting meditation), Felix Unger-like tidiness and an apparent disregard for Zen Masters from the Rinzaï lineage. (Which is stylistically similar to the way D.T. Suzuki used to snub Dogen and the Soto sect in general.) But what most works like itching powder on me is that Warner oftentimes fortifies his assertions with a brass knuckle-tough certitude that brings to mind the barking dogmatism of the various breeds of muscular religionists, to borrow a term from Alan Watts.

None of which should come as any surprise, I suppose, when you consider that Warner starts out the book with a very respectful nod to the Nancy Reagan of punk, Ian MacKaye, saying that it was the famous milk-drinking straightedger whose “teachings” he studied before discovering Dogen. Even though I was already well aware of the fact that Warner takes a dim view of the Devil Brew, it still made the Lee Ving in me bristle a bit when he continued on, commenting on how the philosophies of MacKaye and Dogen are remarkably similar, both stressing “no drink, no drugs, no smoking, just honest hard work and a commitment to what was true.” Now there's a loaded statement for you (and I'm not sure if my pun is intended or not.) The thing is, I just can't see where teetotalling is congruent with Zen's ballyhooed “Middle Way.” It seems to me like just another form of attachment, especially when it becomes a full-blown regimen. And no matter how hard I try, I just can't believe that Realization of Truth is the exclusive privilege of those who pass a daily breathalyzer test and/or urine test.

In fact, I'll really stick my neck out and say that I think there's as much “truth” in a case of cheap beer as there is in the *Shobogenzo*. Beer or book—it all depends on the nervous system interacting with it. In both

cases, truth is sitting there, just waiting to be seen, so to speak. Admittedly, the *Shobogenzo* has probably never caused anyone to plough their car into a telephone pole or wet themselves in public. But, on the other hand, beer has probably never given anyone an over-inflated idea of their own ability to perceive “the real reality.” Well, I take that back. It has, and it does. But at least beer insists on doing so with two conditions: 1) the eruption of self righteous dogma will only ever manifest itself in a manner that other people can only find cartoonish and/or buffoonish, and 2) any such buffoonish proselytizing will be “knocked off its perch” by a subsequent and extended period of pain, nausea, fatigue and embarrassment called “a hangover.” I probably wouldn't have old Dogen on board with this, but I think I might have the support of old Ikkyu, himself a figure in Medieval Japanese Zen lore almost as monumental as Dogen—but one who didn't seem to lose sight of the truth even when his nose was buried in cup after cup of sake. (Not to mention the support I imagine I might get on this point from disreputable Buddhist tipplers like Alan Watts and Chogyam Trungpa—both of whom, oddly enough, were highly regarded by the prim and proper Soto master, Shunryu Suzuki. ((Go figure.)))

But before I let this whole thing get too childish for someone of my lofty station in life, I had better steer things back to matters less sophomoric. I don't want to come off as some sort of halfwit beer-chugging frat boy. So let's take a weighty subject like causality. Warner talks a lot about his—and Dogen's—“deep belief in the rule of cause and effect,” and it continuously tripped me up every time I came across it in *Sit Down and Shut Up*. Am I missing something here? Was I sleeping off a hangover when it was decided that we would all turn back a few hundred years and re-embrace an Isaac-Newton-playing-pocket-billiards model of the way things work? I probably don't know what the hell I'm talking about here and I might be wise to heed the warning of the Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn who oftentimes said, “open mouth, already a mistake.” But here goes nothing: I thought causality is just phantasm, a pattern that our neurological systems “choose” to see, something along the lines of the Kanizsa figure or Tse's Volumetric Worm from the reification principle of Gestalt theory. At best, I thought causality, as a model, is so myopic as to be considered functionally invalid. And I thought the arrival of quantum mechanics was the fat lady singing, as far as causality was concerned.

But maybe I need to rethink all that. And rethink it I will.

And therein, I would say, lies the ultimate beauty of *Sit Down and Shut Up*. It is engaging and entertaining and edifying enough to keep you turning the pages, but it never fails to pop up from time to time and—like Moe Howard from the Three Stooges—give you a double finger poke to the eyes and then pants you. In my dumb punk opinion, so-called Zen Masters best “serve their purpose” when they are irritants. That is to say, when they get you to question your most cherished notions and assumptions to the point where you begin to bump into reality in an altogether new way. And in that manner, Brad Warner is a lot like the re-arranged furniture in Helen Keller's living room, as the old joke goes. It might cost you a few bruises, but disorientation, however brief, might be just the thing to snap you out of your Habitrails of endless thought and let reality pour in. And if that doesn't get you to sit down and shut the hell up, I don't know what will.

Irreverent, cocksure, glib, and wise, this is one damn good book. And maybe best of all, it's bound to flabbergast “proper” Buddhists everywhere. In fact, I think I can already smell the beautiful smell of newly sold meditation mats all across this great land of ours. —Aphid Peewit (New World Library, www.newworldlibrary.com)



Casualties, The: Can't Stop Us: DVD

The last time my poison pen intersected with the pack of colorful Don King-style hairdos known as the “Casualties,” my readers found me being a bit of a nattering nabob of negativity. As a sort of a human CO2 alarm, culturally speaking, I thought I had caught a deadly whiff of fakeness, a toxin that is every bit as lethal as truthiness. So I squawked robotically and eventually, I'm sure, wound up annoying people, just like an alarm low on batteries that beeps through the night, even when there is no real threat whatsoever. I wasn't even drunk when I wrote this particular review in question; but, nevertheless, my sober simian brain took over and made me blow hard about how I had come across something (namely, the Casualties' fashion-punk “flourishes”) as unnatural and cosmetically altered as Kenny Rogers' new face. I even had the gall to question whether the “mohawk” haircut—that hallowed symbol of the social porcupine that was co-opted from the Wyandot tribe

so long ago by Wendy O. Williams—still packed a punch now that it was being widely sported by the likes of the Osbourne kids and various “nü-metal” dorks. For this outburst, I received a couple pats on the back, but the much-expected negative responses were conspicuous by their absence. But I think it’s a safe bet that my mohawked friends, by in large, weren’t happy with my rant.

In Reality TV terms, I had basically voted the Casualties off “punk island” in favor of a stupid woodpecker with a haircut I felt was considerably less stilted than the ones those gentlemen brandish like Anna Nicole used to brandish her formidably fake tits. Looking back, I’m not sure my snide little review really did anyone any good. If anything, I probably managed to do the equivalent of jamming a jack boot straight into the soft little glands that secrete the very self-righteous ooze that rushes up to their heads, envelops their brains like a birdcage, and ultimately makes their hair follicles stick up in neon bellicose defiance—not to mention pure punk rock rectitude. But what was I to do? I couldn’t pretend to just ignore them. As anyone who runs a daycare can tell you, if try to ignore the shouting fits of some boogery little brat, he’s just going to turn up the volume until someone finally acknowledges his histrionics. So here’s the deal: what people didn’t seem to pick up on with that review was that it was simply a textbook case of tough love.

The truth is, I think that, under all the sticky hair products, the Casualties have the potential to be a pretty good band. And this DVD proves it. Basically two movies in one, *Can’t Stop Us* shows the boys and their hairdos touring Mexico (in part one) and Japan (in part two.) Much footage is provided capturing hair erections at various stages of engorgement while the band is entertaining their worshipping fans in these foreign lands with loud, fast, anthemic street punk. In Mexico, we see them dealing with things like Montezuma’s Revenge, deciding whether to sing in Spanish or English, and being hit in the head with 40 oz bottles filled with rocks and dirt. My favorite Mexico moment though is when some young, emboldened tuff gets up on stage to inform Jorge and the boys in the band that they are *capitalists*, not punks. But I have a soft spot for all things confrontational. My least favorite Mexico moments were all the ones where someone thought it would be funny

to repeatedly stick some stupid Muppet into the camera over and over again. As a general rule of thumb: Muppets suck. Leave the puppets at home next tour, fellows.

The Japan footage here is much more of the same sort of thing we saw in the Mexico footage, though the hairdos seemed a bit more erect this time around. Here we see the band dealing with squid jerky, the horrors of the Hiroshima Memorial Museum and, of course, more adoring fans who consider the band members to be “gods.” When you consider that Jerry Lewis is a “god” to the French and David Hasselhoff is a “god” to the Germans, the idea of a few drippy Japanese glam punks thinking the Casualties are gods, isn’t necessarily a national embarrassment.

Now, as my harsh review from way back proved, I fall somewhat short of considering the Casualties to be gods. But in a world where you can’t swing a dead cat without hitting a radio playing the unctuous baby spit-up of wretched bands like Nickelback, the Casualties could do a whole helluva lot worse in my book. And, as they come across in this DVD, they actually seem like pretty decent chaps. Hell, one guy even saves a scrawny lost kitten from a rooftop and feeds it milk. So who am I to belittle these guys? Underneath the jutting shards of hair and protective shells of leather and spikes, beat hearts of gold, apparently.

Plus, the songs started to grow on me a bit. It’s slightly pedestrian street punk, but likeable enough. But enough with the making nice. I do have a helpful hint for the band: don’t be so damn militant about your “nonconformity.” Ease up a bit. Maybe let the hairdos go limp a little more often. But start with baby steps: go out and get some fat slob in a T-shirt who has male pattern baldness and work him into the band. Don’t force him to color what little hair he has with Jell-O brand gelatin or to glue it into little attention-getting spikes. Just let him be the drably colored sack of potatoes that he is and then see what happens. And keep as your motto the words of bum poet laureate Charles Bukowski: “don’t try.” You might be surprised at the results. If nothing else, imagine the amount of money you could save next time the Avon Lady comes around. —Aphid Peewit (Side One Dummy, 1944 N. Cahuenga Blvd., LA, CA 90068)

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